Marxism Today

June 1986 85p

Zhores Medvedev on the Chernobyl Catastrophe
Glenys Kinnock and Joan Ruddock on One World
The Crisis in Education • Red Wedge
Simone de Beauvoir • Bobby Robson • Libya
also inside: Women Alive programme

The Nuclear Plague

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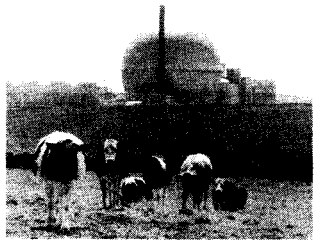

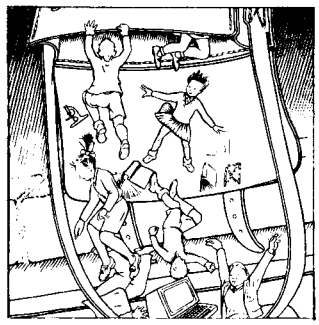

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cartoon: Nick Newman

Election blues

The loss of Ryedale, the close shave in Derbyshire West, and the widespread reverses in the local elections were bad news for the Conservatives but not a calamity. The Conservatives actually did slightly better in these local elections than in 1985. John, Curtice, Clive Payne, and Robert Waller estimated in *The Guardian* that these results indicated that national support for the parties is currently: Conservative 34%; Labour 37%; Alliance 27%. A government in mid-term still reeling after a series of bruising shocks like the Westland affair, the BL fiasco, and the bombing of Libya, must find 34% support reassuring.

There are still some Conservatives prepared to be reassured. They argue like this. The Conservatives have lost less than 10% of the support they won at the 1983 election; on these figures Labour would not be likely to secure an absolute majority even if an election were held tomorrow. But the next election will not be held tomorrow and need not be held for two years; plenty of time for a Conservative recovery.

The party is used to mid-term slumps – it was even more unpopular in December 1981 when its Gallup support reached 23% and approval of the government's record a mere 18%. In the May Gallup poll this year it was 27%. Mrs Thatcher is approved by 31% today against 25% in December 1981.

The electoral outlook is less bleak for the Conservatives than it was then. The economy is growing again, inflation is low and falling, interest rates have begun to come down, substantial tax cuts are promised. The worst of the recession appears to be over. The economy can only get better, the opposition remains divided and a three figure majority is very hard to overturn in one election. The government is still on course and can win through.

Much more in evidence at the moment, however, are the doubters and disillusioned, who are uncertain whether there are any steps the government can now take to retrieve the support it has lost. They argue that the government has lost the political initiative. Its reputation for competence and foresight is in tatters; confidence in its ability to manage the economy successfully has fallen sharply and in several fields it is now losing the ideological argument.

There is growing public support for increased spending on public services rather than tax cuts, and the failure to stop unemployment rising and the continuing decline of manufacturing overshadow the success in bringing down inflation.

The latest in a long line of senior Conservatives to warn that the government is heading straight for the rocks is John Biffen. In his interview on *Weekend World,* Biffen argued for a major change not just in presentation but in policy and personalities. Despite protesting his loyalty to the leader, Biffen clearly believes that Thatcher's leadership is now *the* major obstacle in the way of the Conservatives winning again. His call for a balanced ticket and for substantial policy changes, in particular the shelving of the commitment to reduce income tax to 25p in the £, can only be realised if Thatcher departs.

'Downing Street sources' immediately labelled Biffen as a semi-detached member of the government. Nigel Lawson interviewed the next day on *Newsnight* helpfully stated that he had not heard Biffen's interview, so could not comment on it. He was remarkably well-informed about its contents, however. There was no need he claimed for a balanced ticket. Collective leadership was already provided by the cabinet (as displayed in all its finery during the Westland affair).

Cutting income tax to 29p in the £, Lawson confirmed, was still the government's priority. There was no need to restore cuts in public services because the government had been steadily increasing spending on services. The government had no need to change its policies at all. What was required was better communication of the truth about government polices. (On hearing this reassuring news, Conservative MPs in marginal seats had to be restrained by the whips from leaping out of windows in the Palace of Westminster).

The government's position is not hopeless, but its electoral strategy of playing on the divisions in the opposition and the votes of those in jobs with above average earnings is no longer working. What the May 8 results underscore is the fragile nature of Thatcherism's electoral base. The seats won in 1979 and still more in 1983 over-stated the popular support for the Conservatives. With the ending of the period between 1982 and 1984, when the government gained popularity through its resolute stand against enemies without and enemies within, the Conservative vote is now being squeezed from two sides.

Both Labour and the Alliance are taking votes from the Conservatives. A divided opposition only works to the Conservatives advantage if one of the opposition parties is sinking and the other rising, while Conservative support remains stable. If both opposition parties are making net gains in support the Conservatives are in trouble.

Many voters at present are eager to vote against the government and the chances of them doing so rather than abstaining are increased because there are two credible oppostion parties. If the Conservatives direct their attack on the Alliance they may strengthen the appeal of Labour and vice versa. The feeble attempts by Norman Tebbit to portray the two parties as identical fools nobody.

As the party of government there is little the Conservatives can do except change their leader. This will not be easy to arrange. But it may be easier than trying to change the policies while keeping the present leadership. Many of the interests the Conserva-

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tives have antagonised could be appeased by skilful political management. But once a government starts dancing to tunes played by its opponents it may suffer further damage to its own standing and credibiltiy. Who will believe a Tory party led by Margaret Thatcher and Norman Tebbit proclaiming the need for higher public spending?

The government would do better to stick to its tax cuts and hope that a consumer boom will rekindle loyalty in its heartlands in the South and South-East. The problem for the Thatcherites in the government is whether they can muster sufficient support in the cabinet and the party to continue the Thatcherite stragtegy. In the face of mounting electoral pressures and few signs that the Thatcherite programme for economic recovery has succeeded, Thatcher knows that she is in danger of losing the political initiative and shipwrecking her party and many of her achievements.

She has to hope events will rescue her as they have so often in the past. Declarations of political will are not enough to save her.

Andrew Gamble

Gadafy rules the roost

A month after the US raid on Tripoli, the political scene in Libya seems remarkably little changed. Despite media rumour and American expectations, Colonel Gadafy is still in charge and the 'junta' that was supposed to have reined him in at the end of April has turned out to be no more than a journalistic mirage.

Downtown areas of Tripoli and Benghazi, it is true, have been battered by US bombs, Libyan diplomatic representation abroad has been severely cut, the revolutionary rhetoric that customarily emerges from what has now become the Great Libyan Jamahiriyah after its baptism by fire in mid-April has been cut back and Western leaders have returned from Tokyo warmed by the knowledge that they have taken a resolute and united stand on terrorism, as the Reagan administration had required.

Yet Libyans themselves seem to have accepted recent events with an apathetic tolerance after a short-lived outburst of panic and anger at the raids and the loss of life they caused. There seems to be a torpid indifference, compounded by a weary resignation over the failure of the Arab world to support Libya in its hour of need and by the pragmatic awareness that life goes on.

And life in the *jamahiriyah* – the 'state of the masses', that unique construct of direct popular democracy and radical coercion that Colonel Gadafy wishes to become his political legacy to the Third World – has become very difficult in recent years. Not only has the restructuring of the retail trade in the recent past caused tremendous problems of supply – the local shop has been replaced by vast hypermarkets which are usually remote and always suffer from shortages and distribution problems – but consumers have had also to face the consequences of impending economic collapse.

The problem is that Libya, despite all the efforts made during the past two decades to create a viable and differentiated economic base, still depends crucially on imports to satisfy the needs of its burgeoning population which now stands at close to 4m and is growing at over 3% annually – one of the fastest growing populations in the world. Virtually all the consumer goods it needs and 70% of its food has to be imported. Nor is this situation the fault of the Gadafy regime, although many mistakes have been made.

Libyans take to the streets after the American bombing.

The simple fact is that, in 1951, when it gained independence, Libya was virtually the poorest country in Africa, bruised by the desert campaigns of the second world war and by the legacy of Italian fascist colonial policy in the wake of a 16 year long war that Italy had undertaken to subdue its Mediterranean colony. To that historical legacy is added a harsh physical environment, for 95% of the country, according to UN definitions, is arid desert.

Oil has, since 1963, bought a release from this inherent poverty and the Gadafy regime since 1969 has, for all its faults and brutality, made sure that oil revenues have filtered down to every facet of Libyan society. Conspicuous examples of corruption and wealth are not unknown in the *jamahiriyah*, particularly amongst those who control economic and political life, but the vast majority of Libyans have benefited from the country's enormous oil reserves.

Indeed, Libya today is really a consumer society on which a radical egalitarianism has been imposed so that acquisitive individualism is supposed to be subordinated to the collective imperative, but which ultimately depends on its access to the markets of the developed world for its economic survival. This inherent contradiction, that generates the political apathy which enrages the Colonel and persists despite the spur of the revolutionary committee movement, has been intensified since 1980 by the collapse of Libya's oil revenues – from $22bn in 1980, $15bn in 1981, $14bn in 1982, $11bn in 1983, $9bn in 1984, $8.5bn in 1985 to perhaps as little as $4-6bn in 1986.

The collapse translates itself into shortages, frustration and anger. Most people in the cities – and most people now live in the cities – have become increasingly obsessed with their worsening economic circumstances and have had less and less time for the radicalism of their government, both at home and abroad.

In any case, Colonel Gadafy's egalitarian vision does not correspond to the social reality. Libya is a divided society in which old ethnic tensions and historical differences mirror chronological and ideological discontinuities. Tribalism is still strong – indeed, the regime makes use of it itself, since most of the Colonel's close collaborators come from his tribal group, the Qadhadhfa, while the urban Tripolitanians and the Cyrenaicans

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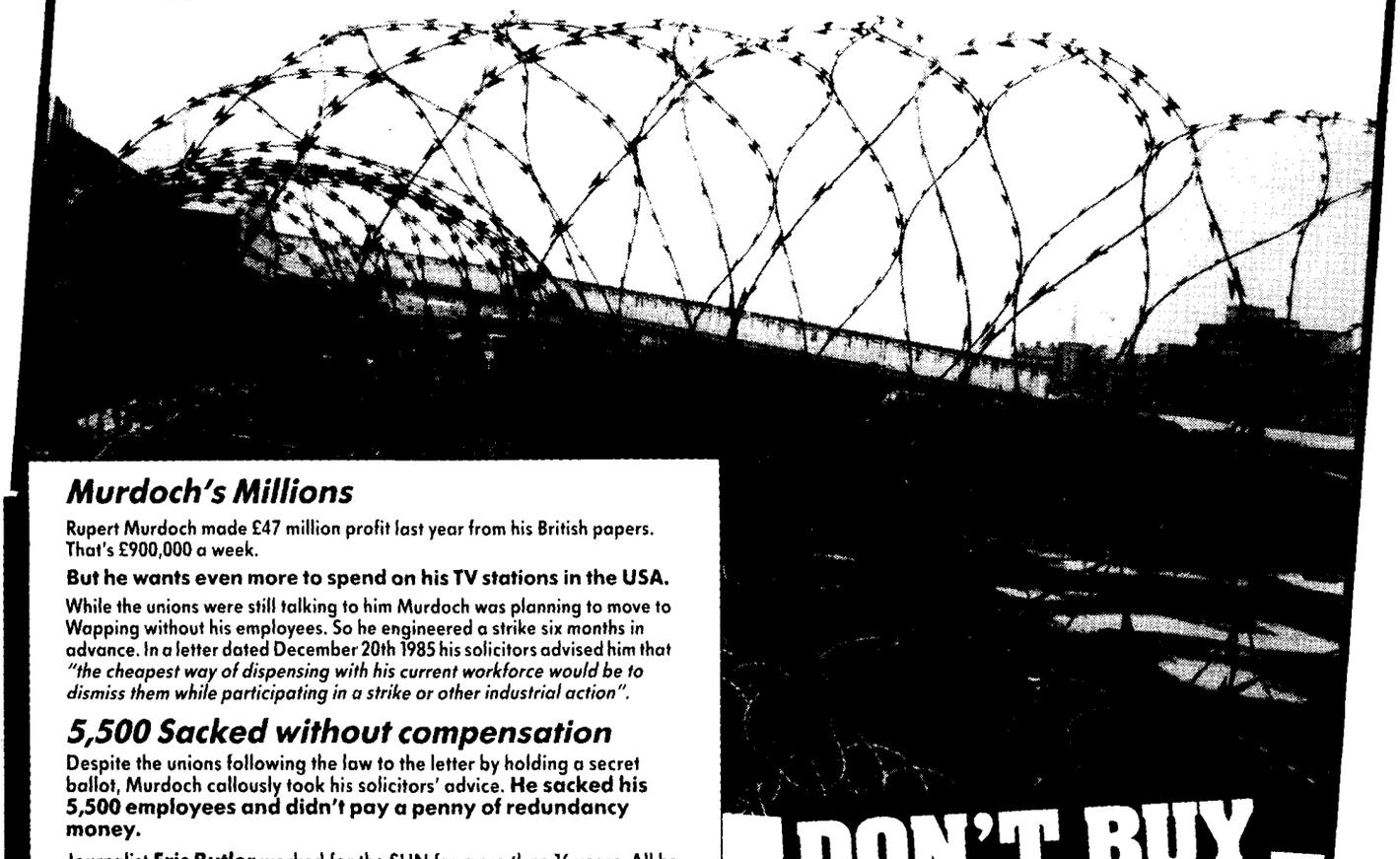

Murdoch's Millions

Rupert Murdoch made £47 million profit last year from his British papers. That's £900,000 a week.

But he wants even more to spend on his TV stations in the USA.

While the unions were still talking to him Murdoch was planning to move to Wapping without his employees. So he engineered a strike six months in advance. In a letter dated December 20th 1985 his solicitors advised him that *"the cheapest way of dispensing with his current workforce would be to dismiss them while participating in a strike or other industrial action".*

5,500 Sacked without compensation

Despite the unions following the law to the letter by holding a secret ballot, Murdoch callously took his solicitors' advice. **He sacked his 5,500 employees and didn't pay a penny of redundancy money.**

Journalist **Eric Butler** worked for the SUN for more than 16 years. All he got from Murdoch was a letter beginning *"Dear Sir or Madam"* telling him he was sacked.

Eileen Lindsay, a punch card operator at the Sunday Times for 8 years, says *"Life has certainly been tough since Murdoch sacked us. I have two young children to keep, and I just about managed when I was working."*

Martin Green, a printing press engineer says *"We had already agreed to move to Wapping but Murdoch forced us into striking so he could sack us. I've never been on strike before in my life. I worked for Murdoch for 16 years."*

Murdoch is avoiding his responsibilities to 5,500 people like Eric, Eileen and Martin. That is the main issue. The question of what to do with his unwanted print works is a secondary issue. We don't believe in trading property for people.

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with their traditions of supporting the Sanusi religious order in colonial times and the monarchy thereafter view each other with mutual suspicion.

Even youth, the group on which the Gadafy regime has placed an almost Jesuitical trust, is divided. Arrayed against the radicals of the revolutionary committee movement are students who resent the militarisation of Libyan society, in which every able-bodied person is obliged to be ready for service in the popular militia, and who recall the brutal suppression of student protest in Benghazi in April 1976 when three students were publicly hanged.

On the eve of the US raid on Tripoli, then, the strained economic circumstances had added to the inherent strains in Libya and the disenchantment of most people with radical politics to generate a powerful sense of distaste for the Gadafy regime. The sentiment was inchoate and lacked a focus because the regime had destroyed opposition groups inside Libya in the wake of the unsuccessful May 1984 coup attempt, in a campaign that had been capped in June 1984 by a series of public trials that were little more than lynchings.

Nonetheless, most Libyans felt that the time was fast approaching when the regime would fall under its own weight, drowned, as it were, in a flood of underpriced oil and trade debt. Colonel Gadafy was, furthermore, the victim of growing isolation in the Arab world – treated with indifference by radicals and with dislike by moderates, some of whom were quite prepared to discreetly help in his regime's demise.

The raids have changed all that. Libyans have been horrified by the casual brutality of the raids and resent the racist connotations of Western claims that Libya 'masterminds' terrorism. They cannot forget that, while Libya has been publicly pilloried for the policies of its idiosyncratic ruler, the wider failure of the West to contribute towards a solution to the problems of the Middle East – which most people in Libya would argue were largely a Western creation – is passed over in silence or camouflaged by pious statements condemning violence with no consideration of its causes.

Ironically the US raids have, in effect, drawn the Libyan people and their regime closer together in the face of what they see as an unwarranted aggression against themselves. The Reagan administration has, in short, helped the Gadafy regime to survive a little longer.

George Henderson

Women and unions

Are Tory trade union laws helping women gain a more equitable share of power at the top of Britain's trade unions?

To float the notion of Tory legislation in any way advancing the cause of women's equality may seem bizarre against a backdrop of government inspired measures which threaten to worsen the lot of women workers: reform of the wages councils, the Fowler review and the thrust towards labour market flexibility.

However, the 1984 Trade Union Act stipulation that all voting members on union executives must be chosen through secret, individual membership ballots appears, from evidence so far, to be helping redress the imbalance of years of ingrained male domination.

Changes in election procedures have been foisted on unions which previously adopted a mode other than secret ballots to elect their executives, under threat of legal sanction.

A cursory analysis of recent elections in four unions which have changed their rules to comply with the Act reveals a swing towards increased representation by women.

★ The 77,000 strong National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers now has 11 women members on its 14 strong executive. Turnout at the poll – in a union with around 90% female membership – averaged 75%, far higher than in previous elections.

★ Seven out of 27 seats on the Inland Revenue Staff Federation (IRSF) executive are now held by women. 70% of the 55,000 membership are women. Out of 68 candidates standing for election, only 11 were women, seven of whom were elected.

★ Women's representation on the 16-strong APEX executive has been boosted from three to five. Women candidates topped the poll in every seat contested. Nearly 55% of the union's 90,000 members are female.

★ A woman has recently been elected to one of two national seats on the ASTMS executive – confounding insider pundits.

Whether this cluster of results proves to be an aberrant quirk rather than the harbinger of a trend will become clearer when more unions put their newly adopted procedures to the test.

All four elections cited took place after successful ballots on retention (or establishment in the IRSF's case) of union political funds. The ballot requirement – another measure imposed by the government – is now widely acknowledged as spurring union leaderships to attempt to revitalise union structures and improve communication with members. The link between high election turnouts and the political fund campaigns is not hard to trace.

Secret ballots could well be providing a mechanism for change. But the work of women activists – who have pushed for more representative structures and urged unions to get their houses in order – has prepared the ground. Women, who make up roughly a third of Britain's 9.5m trade unionists, are grossly under-represented in all strata of trade union hierarchies – from the TUC general council to the workplace branch.

Within trade unions, the reality of advancing the role of women still lags lamentably behind the rhetoric. The TUC's 10-point charter aimed at progressing the drive towards women's equality inside unions was published seven years ago. It included an exhortation for unions to look to their structures to see if they hampered women from reaching decision-making bodies and championed the need for union meetings to be held in working time wherever possible, with childcare provisions on hand.

Progress has been made – NUPE's campaigns for meetings in work time are notable. Many unions have appointed women's officers and set up women's committees at national and regional level.

But the gap between policy and practice remains and unions still appear detached and irrelevant to many women members – and potential recruits. A recent MORI survey on attitudes at work found that only 19% of female trade unionists, against 41% of their male counterparts, had voted in a union election. Two per cent had served as union officials compared to 9% of men polled, and 25% of women against 45% of men had been to a union meeting.

If the secret ballot mechanism does prove to help change the complexion of union executives to give women a fairer slice of power it will be a galling irony for existing leaderships: a measure forced on them by a hostile government.

Unions should now make a renewed drive to translate rostrum resolutions into reality. The recruitment of more women full-time officials – current estimates number them at a shaming five per cent – would be a start.

Helen Hague

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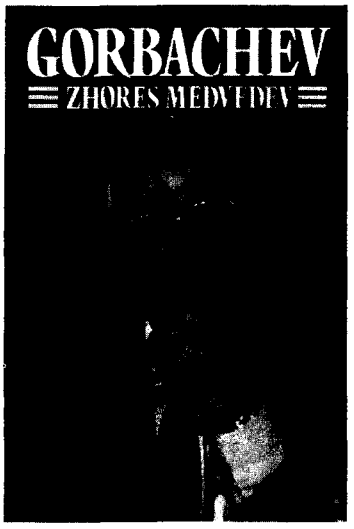

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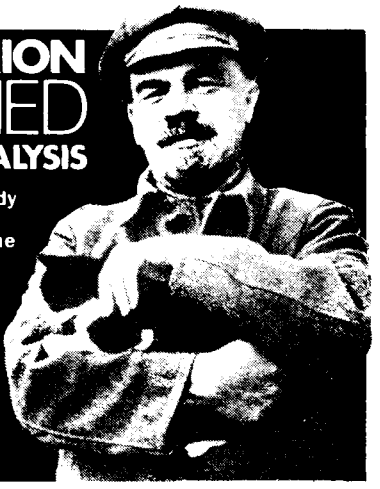

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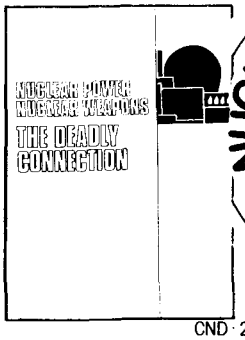

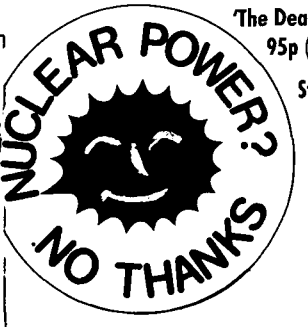

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CHERNOBYL FALLOUT

Chernobyl overnight has transformed the debate about nuclear power in Britain. Things will never be quite the same again.

A Nuclear Cloud Over Britain

Tony Hall

BRIDPORT in Dorset is not a radical town. Unlike Lewes in Sussex, it has no history of political discontent, no Tom Payne on its roll of former inhabitants. Unlike Liverpool, it has no Militant tendency, no Derek Hatton on its list of present citizens. It is a small town in safe Conservative territory, disturbed only by the breezes that blow across the Channel from France and more ominously, from central Europe.

On a recent Saturday morning the main street was besieged with people of all ages rattling boxes for Greenpeace. Most surprising was the fact that young people, old people, men carrying heavy shopping, women pushing prams, even the the more red-faced, corduroyed county types sported stickers showing that they had made a contribution to funds.

Some may have felt strongly about whales, others about hedgerows or chemical pollution. But for the first time on a large scale it is possible to discuss a new factor: an unease, an anxiety about nuclear power. After the events in the Ukraine, nuclear power in Britain is now where the industry and its advocates hoped it would never be: centre stage and a political hot potato of the highest order.

Shifting sands

Two opinion polls bear this out. NOP's survey taken some time before the Chernobyl catastrophe showed that only 11% of those sampled supported the construction of new nuclear power stations. Around three quarters were concerned about the plethora of leaks from BNFL's Sellafield complex. But another poll carried out by Gallup at the beginning of May for the BBC tv *This Week, Next Week* programme confirms this public anxiety. Most interestingly, whereas 45% of those sampled in January said they would oppose a nuclear power plant in their area, the figure had risen to 65% in only four months. 55% were not convinced that a similar accident to Chernobyl could not happen here. Yet another poll in mid-May reinforced this trend.

It is this change in public opinion that is most worrying the nuclear industry. Such widespread public disquiet has not been felt before. How long it lasts is quite a different matter. But Lord Marshall, the chairperson of the Central Electricity Generating Board, was characteristically careful when he argued that the Chernobyl disaster had indeed given the advocates of nuclear power quite a challenge to resecure public acceptability.

There have always been two strands running through the development of nuclear power in Britain. On the one hand, a belief in its ultimate promise: clean cheap unlimited electricity, a way out of the country's dependence on fossil fuels. On the other, a mistrust of its organisation, its obsession with secrecy, its sometimes arrogant assumption that the scientists of the nuclear establishment know best. Up to now this latter attitude has been held by a minority, an intellectual view not shared by the vast majority of the voting population.

Behind closed doors

Mistrust of nuclear power in Britain goes back to its origins. It has a history of secrecy, much to do with its genesis inside the wartime defence establishment. Attlee was obsessed with keeping the programme under wraps, to the point where he even objected to a press visit to the research establishment at Harwell. But there were other causes of this obsessive secrecy too.

The Atomic Energy Act of 1946 decreed that any person who disclosed any information whatsoever about any atomic plant or process would be heavily fined or sent to prison for five years.

The House of Commons was kept in a state of almost total ignorance about the development of atomic energy. It was not until the end of the 50s, when all the key decisions had been made about the size of the nuclear programme and the scale of the organisation that was to run it, that a committee of MPs conducted an inquiry into this rapidly expanding, government

photo: Camera Press

Windscale: cows graze in the nearby fields.

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funded industry. Even then, the scale of their inquiry was very limited.

If parliament's attempts to scrutinise the project were thwarted, then the press fared no better. One MP, Mr Palmer from Wimbledon, put it this way: 'It's curious to notice the aloofness of the press from this subject as from sex in the past'. For compared with the coverage in the United States, the way the British press dealt with this vitally important issue was woefully inadequate. It was not entirely their own fault. The D-notice arrangements, coupled with the 1946 Atomic Energy Act and the Official Secrets Act, completed a wall of silence erected around atomic energy.

Without control

In the meantime, a nuclear industry had grown up in Britain that defied challenge. The Atomic Energy Authority, charged with the development of civilian nuclear power in Britain, was given unprecedented powers. Ministers themselves agreed they were founding 'a very novel and exeptional body'. One of the Authority's leading parliamentary critics warned of the birth of something very sinister. There was a new form of technocracy emerging of a most sinister kind: 'here we are to have a body of technocrats which will be completely removed from effective democratic control, a body of people, brilliant in their own particular functions no doubt, but nonetheless, not responsible in any way to parliament.

'The financial independence of the Authority was considerable and largely shrouded from the House of Commons. And the power and influence of the Authority was further enhanced by simple virtue of their predominance in the field of policy-making. It formulated and dictated the present shape and organisation of nuclear power in Britain. A select committee report in the late 60s made clear the Authority's autonomy. It received 'little or no challenge from government' being 'virtually unassailable in the advice they give'. Today, the main impetus for nuclear power comes not from the AEA but from the Central Electricity Generating Board. However, the belief in the promise of nuclear power and the organisational momentum behind it remains as strong.

Thatcher's programme

It would take a lot to convince this government not to continue to develop nuclear power. Of more than symbolic importance was Margaret Thatcher's visit to France, as one of her first acts as prime minister. The French programme based on PWRs, was quoted time and time again in Whitehall and elsewhere as an example of what Britain should be aiming for. It was a huge programme, costing enormous sums, built well to schedule, and providing, it was said, a future of low full costs for French industry. Mrs Thatcher made clear her delight at their achievements.

On Tuesday October 23, 1979, a cabinet meeting was held that heard the then Energy Secretary, David Howell, outline a substantial nuclear programme of thermal reactors totalling some 15 gigawatts of capacity, or ten power stations. They would hope to build one new power station a year from 1982 onwards, and favoured the American PWR design.

Two other important considerations were noted. First, that nuclear power provided security against industrial action

mistrust of nuclear power in Britain goes back to its origins

by the miners or the transport workers. Even after the defeat of the NUM last year, that factor will have lost none of its potency. And second, the problem of public opposition to nuclear power was also examined, especially in the light of the accident at Three Mile Island involving a PWR. The government, according to the minutes, might make 'more rapid progress towards its objective by a low profile approach, which avoided putting the government into the position of confrontation with the protestors'.

This programme was a failure. Within a year, it was clear that the government had no chance of achieving their target. The energy forecasts upon which it had been based turned out to be overly optimistic. Conservation, recession, a hefty amount of over-capacity, coupled with a fall in the price of oil, made such a build up unnesessary. From then on, each new power station would be assessed on merit. Their redefinition however also marked very real problems being faced developing the PWR in Britain.

But to make sure that even this reduced programme produced dividends, the government brought in Sir Walter, now Lord, Marshall. He had been sacked by Tony Benn from his job as chief secretary at the Department of Energy for advocating nuclear power too strongly. In the mid 70s he chaired a committee looking into the safety of the PWR. In 1981, this formidable operator was put in charge of a task force to iron out the problems involved in the development of the PWR in Britain. Then a year later, he was put in a position of immense importance, as head of the CEGB. The pro-nuclear, pro-PWR brigade was, after a decade of struggle, firmly in the ascendant. And even after a mammoth inquiry into the plans to build a PWR at Sizewell, there is nothing to suggest its star has dimmed.

Growing scepticism

And yet. Concern and criticism about nuclear power has now become institutional. In the early 70s, it was Friends of the Earth, and later groups such as SCRAM (the Scottish Campaign to resist the atomic menace) that made the going. The inquiry into the building of a reprocessing plant at Windscale, now Sellafield, brought in other groups, not at all left wing, like the Town and Country Planning Association, and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England. The Flowers Commission into the environmental consequences of nuclear power was a monumental milestone in the history of opposition to nuclear power in Britain. Their conclusion: 'it would be irresponsible and morally wrong to commit future generations to the consequences of fission power on a massive scale unless it has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that at least one method exists for the safe isolation of these wastes for an indefinite future.' It made, according to one leading authority, 'reasoned criticism of fission energy almost orthodox.'

Then, in the 80s, a series of reports added further weight to the criticisms of nuclear policy. In 1981, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, not known as a hot bed of radical opinion, discovered 'serious weaknesses' in the CEGB's investment appraisal. 'The Board's conduct in this regard,' they concluded, 'operates against the public interest.' They were not convinced the Board had demonstrated the case for a nuclear power programme.

The select committee on energy weighed in: 'in view of the inevitable uncertainties surrounding many of the Board's key assumptions, the obscurity of the presentation of much of the relevant information . . . we remain unconvinced that the CEGB and the government have satisfactorily made out the economic and industrial case for a programme of the size referred to by the secretary of state.' And

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then, earlier this year, the House of Commons' environment committee sharply criticised the industry's waste management policies. And they even suggested the abandonment of the THORP reprocessing plant under construction at Sellafield, if financial studies showed that were feasible.

The Chernobyl disaster has greatly re-emphasised this trend. Like the Flowers Commission before, it has made criticism of nuclear power almost orthodox. The debate in the coming year will concentrate on three issues: secrecy, dumping, and whether nuclear power has a future at all.

The spectre of secrecy that has bedevilled atomic energy since its inception, has come to the fore again. Critical of the argument that the British nuclear industry is as open as it should be, the Liberal MP Paddy Ashdown, for example, wrote of his own experiences in the light of the Chernobyl disaster. He criticised the government for failing to make public their 20 year review of the safety of the Magnox power stations. He also described how it took three parliamentary questions to extract the fact that there had been a small release of radioactivity from Hinkley Point, when the CEGB said there had been none.

In the very week of the Chernobyl disaster, a major national newspaper published details of an incident at Dungeness A power station. Again, the story concentrated on the difficulty of obtaining information. The result of this mishandling by the authorities was an article across seven columns of the front page. The last Labour government, on Tony Benn's insistence, ensured that every incident was made public. This government took a more restrictive view, though they too have gone back to the earlier policy in the light of Chernobyl. It will ensure a high profile for nuclear power in the coming months.

the authorities have said such an accident could not happen here

Has it a future?

The second major question facing nuclear power is the disposal of waste. There has been a furious row, far from over, about the potential sites for waste disposal. The Conservative Chief Whip, John Wakeham, showed the scale of the opposition when he let it be known that he was very much against the site being located in his constituency. The Commons select committee examining the problem of nuclear waste called it the 'NIMBY' syndrome, short for 'Not in my back yard.'

The government tried to take some of the sting out of the plans during the Chernobyl crisis, by announcing that only low level waste would be dumped. But that still leaves the problem of what to do with intermediate and high level waste. On that front, Britain lags behind West Germany, Sweden, the USA and France. In fact one programme researching the disposal of high level waste was actually abandoned five years ago.

There will also be renewed calls for the end of fuel reprocessing in this country. The problem is that whereas all emissions from Sellafield should be stopped, it would be unrealistic to close down the plant in the foreseeable future. Even if the development of nuclear power were to stop in Britain tomorrow, the job of cleaning up would take years. The real debate should be about whether reprocessing should be expanded, by the continued construction of the new plant at Sellafield, and by the building of a new facility at Dounreay. It may be that questions of economics, as well as safety and public concern, rule against reprocessing as an option.

The other major question thrown into relief by Chernobyl, is whether nuclear power has a future at all. Those who oppose it have been growing in strength in the past year. The green movement, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace have all been important in setting the tone and parameters of debate. But of greater significance is the growth of opposition in the Labour party. Last year, the party conference, on a card vote, agreed to phase out nuclear power. Some of the traditional union opposition had been overcome, though not by enough to ensure the policy an automatic place in the next election manifesto. The line that the party leader and the environment spokespeople are advocating is slightly more cautious: they argue that Britain's reserves of coal, oil and gas give time for a pause in the construction of nuclear plants. Sizewell B, they argue, should not be given the go-ahead. It is an intoxicating argument.

A pause for reflection

There is no doubt that the government believe that nuclear power has an essential contribution to make to the British energy mix in the long term. It is what most other industrialised nations are doing. But Britain is unique in being self-sufficient in energy resources. Uniquely, therefore, Britain has time to pause and consider the alternatives. At the Sizewell inquiry for example, the CEGB agreed that renewable resources could provide up to 20% of their needs without operational problems. There is also coal, with supplies that could last for hundreds of years. There is the technology to ensure coal fired power stations would be environmentally safe, and there is the technology to turn coal into oil or gas. Up to now these decisions have been made on economics alone, After Chernobyl, the case for coal and for renewable resources could also depend on safety.

cartoon: Nick Newman

Which really brings the argument about nuclear power back to public opinion. Earlier this year, the manager of one of the CEGB's nuclear stations told me: 'this will be a make or break year for nuclear power in this country.' That was before the leaks and malfunctions at Sellafield dominated the headlines for the first two months of the year. That was before a jumpy media reported accidental discharges from such stations as Sizewell and Trawsfynydd. And that was before, statements concerning these incidents were changed, amended or delayed by press officers seeking to establish the truth for a hungry press, but in reality only adding to some people's suspicion that something was not

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quite right. And of course, that was before Chernobyl. And that has changed much.

The new atmosphere

The authorities have said such an accident could not happen here, and have commended the safety record of the British nuclear establishments. The problem they have to deal with is that the public now knows first hand, the result of a major nuclear accident. Their response in the future may defy reason and sophisticated arguments. A one in a million risk, it may be argued, is not much consolation for the people of Pripyat or Kiev. The apparently disorganised initial response of the authorities in Britain to the small levels of radioactivity passing over has raised other questions in the public mind. Who are these people who are deciding what level of radiation is safe? Are they trying to hide something? Do we believe them? These are genuine if irrational anxieties thrown up by the catastrophe.

Later this year, Sir Frank Layfield QC will give his view on whether Sizewell B should be built. In the pre-Chernobyl world there was a widespread belief that after a great deal of thought, he could do little else but give the green light to the PWR. The government would in turn grant their blessing, and a delighted Lord Marshall would begin to construct the first of a series of reactors across Britain. The odds are that that will still happen. But in the post-Chernobyl world, a pause before any rush into a new nuclear power programme may look an electorally more popular option. And an election is not far away.

Soviet Power Failures

Zhores A Medvedev

The Chernobyl disaster took the world by surprise. If anything, the Soviet Union was even less prepared.

'THE DISASTER AT CHERNOBYL' is how the accident at the nuclear plant on April 26 will be known for many years to come. 'The Battle of Chernobyl' is how this tragedy will be known in the Soviet Union. Gorbachev's television address to the Soviet public on May 14 about the seriousness of the accident and its consequences had very few precedents in the Soviet history. It could be compared with Lenin's appeal to the nation in 1920 on the danger of the typhus epidemic for the fate of the revolution or Stalin's delayed broadcast on July 3, 1941 on German aggression.

There was strong criticism in the West of the way the Soviet information sources treated the disaster from the very beginning, trying to cover it up during the first few days, and to minimise it later and present it as one among others. There was also Soviet criticism of the way the Western media and officials treated the disaster, often for propaganda purposes. Old reflexes and prejudices of a purely political nature were clearly visible on both sides of the East-West divide. But it must be said, much Western coverage showed little concern for the victims of the tragedy. It was seen as a golden opportunity for another dose of anti-Soviet propaganda.

When the slow post-mortem of the worst disaster in the history of civil nuclear energy started, it became clear that it was not modern technology, automation or safety devices that prevented the ultimate tragedy – a meltdown nightmare and the destruction of the three reactors nearby – but the courage of ordinary men and women who were ready for sacrifice. But if the firemen and the emergency staff of the three other nuclear power stations behaved admirably, the general picture of 'crisis management' which emerges from the pages of *Pravda* and *Izvestyia* and many other Soviet newspapers makes many people inside and outside the Soviet Union ask some difficult questions.

Why were the first reports about the accident made from Sweden, about 50 hours after the reactor explosion, but not from Moscow? Why was the evacuation of the nearest town Pripyat, just a few miles north of the burning reactor, only started 36 hours after the explosion? Why were all four reactors so close, indeed practically under the same roof, and with one shared chimney? Why were Soviet journalists only allowed to report from the disaster area 10 days after the accident when the situation was declared as 'stabilised'?

Delays in evacuation

When the radioactive cloud was already over Scandinavia, the local medical services in Pripyat and Chernobyl still did not yet know the real picture of the health risk. It was later explained (*Izvestyia* May 9, 1986) that the delays in the evacuation were due to the fact that the medical and radiological services which work at the nuclear power stations 'have no contact with the medical services outside the sanitary zone (which is 2.5 km in radius) and are not responsible for the condition of the air, water and soil outside the territory of the power station'. The *Izvestyia* correspondent was surprised, but the picture is familiar for anybody who has worked in any of the Soviet 'atomic centres'.

All medical facilities inside such towns and relevant for nuclear installations are serviced and directed by the special classified department of the Ministry of Health. All other settlements outside the 2.5 km radius of the 'health protection zone' belong to the usual district health service network which does not have either special equipment or experience in dealing with radiation hazards. The Ministry of Health never contemplated the emergency measures beyond the 'health protection zones' and does not have contact with the medical services of the residential areas which are supervised by the Kiev regional health authorities. This strange 'compartmentalisation' of the medical services was inherited from the early 1950s when all nuclear reactors were working for military purposes. Thus, in the old 'atomic towns' like Obninsk, the invisible line between 'special' and general medical networks divides streets, not territories.

As a scientist who worked for about 10 years in the field of medical radiology, I have followed the medical aspects of the tragedy most carefully. It took more than 10 days to declassify the radiation level figures for the Soviet press. Boris Yeltsin, while in Hamburg on May 3, was the first to end the silence about the radiation levels around the Chernobyl plant but his re-

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marks were not reported in the USSR. On May 6, *Izvestyia* strongly criticised the British government for the evacuation of British students from Kiev and Minsk, but as was reported later (*Izvestyia* May 12, 1986), Kiev was already exposed to the 'emergency radiation limit'. For this 'emergency limit', the 'permissible' annual dose of radiation was increased to 10 roentgen, twice the 'permissible' annual dose for professionals working with radioactive isotopes. All children (up to the age 14) were evacuated from Kiev a few days after the British students.

The long-term effects

In 1950s and 1960s Soviet medicine knew very little about the long-term effect of radiation (via cancer and genetics). The beginning of the nuclear era was linked with ignorance about radiation hazards in very many countries of the world. Japan was the first country where the long-term effect of different doses of radiation was established most clearly. But this knowledge did not start to be taken seriously in the Soviet Union until the end of Lysenko's dominance in Soviet biology and genetics.

Genetics and radiation genetics became part of the medical and biological education in the Soviet Union only after 1967. This situation was partly due to Lysenko's influence and partly a result of the severe restrictions imposed upon Soviet scientists in terms of travelling abroad and international cooperation.

The study of the long-term effects (or so called 'late effect') of radiation was never encouraged and the evaluation of the possible genetic and other (cancer) consequences of radiation exposure remains absent from Soviet textbooks on radiation genetics and radiation medicine. This is why Soviet doctors normally concentrate their attention on the different forms of radiation sickness, but do not follow the 'long-term' effect beyond the 'recovery period' of 2-3 years. This attitude certainly reduces the population's awareness of the danger to health presented by radiation.

until now . . . there has not been a single article in the Soviet press which has tried to give the public any explanation

Until now, already more than three weeks after the accident, there has not been a single article in the Soviet press which has tried to give the public any explanation and guidance about the possible long-term effects of radiation. It is clear that the medical authorities underestimated the health hazards of radiation and were not ready to deal with a large-scale emergency. The human toll of the disaster is rising every week and only after many years can the real picture be evaluated properly.

Information delays

There have been many questions about the Soviet government's inability to notify neighbouring countries about the accident and the danger from the radiation cloud. This failure will have serious political consequences. The most likely explanation is very simple: the Soviet Union does not have a proper system for monitoring the distribution of a radioactive cloud.

The State Committee on Meteorology, which is in charge of monitoring radioactivity in the air, was just not able to provide the government with accurate information about the formation of the radioactive plume either inside or outside the Soviet Union. Now the Soviet Union has a network of 'meteorological towers' which have to analyse samples of air for radioactivity in addition to their many other tasks. But this part of the meteorological service is also highly classified and is not linked with the local alarm system. It is not able to react rapidly and most of it probably was out of action on Saturday and Sunday, despite the accident in Chernobyl.

When some high level bureaucrats later complained about the 'local' officials' inability to make a proper assessment of the seriousness of the disaster – they were hardly able to name the scapegoats – the underlying problem is that there is no proper system of response to emergencies like Chernobyl in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet media was also not in a position to react properly, and for more than two weeks the Soviet public did not know the real picture. This was because the media too was largely in the dark. Even Georgy Arbatov, a leading Soviet advisor and central committee member, was in a similar position. Thus he tried to 'minimise' the accident and to consider it as 'one among many others' and as the first in the Soviet Union. Why so much noise abroad – was Arbatov's question in his *Pravda* article on May 9 under the title 'A Boomerang'. It was after all the 153rd serious accident in nuclear industry and all 152 before happened outside the Soviet Union.

We should perhaps add here, however, that it is well-known that the Soviet Union does not report accidents in the nuclear industry and has not responded to requests about accidents which became known through some unofficial sources. The serious accident in the Urals in 1958 was listed in all reviews on reactor-related

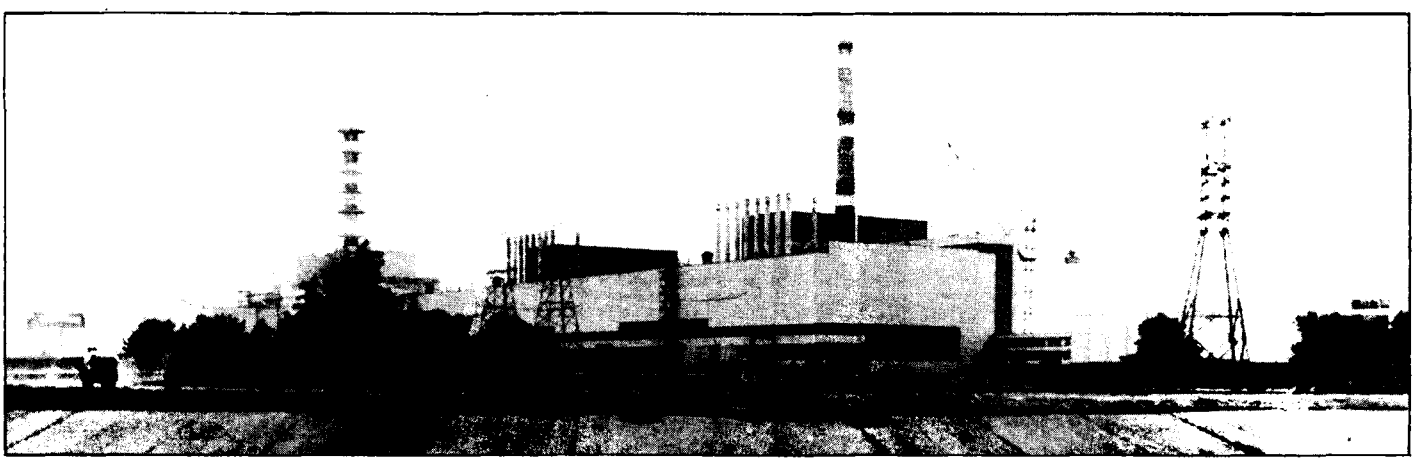

photo: Frank Spooner Pictures

Chernobyl: will the Soviet Union recover from the worst disaster in the history of civil nuclear energy?

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accidents published abroad, but the nature and consequences of the accident remained unknown. The seriousness of the accident became clear in the West only in late 1970s when the use of satellite photography and other methods 'discovered' the radioactively contaminated wasteland between the towns of Kyshtym and Kasli. 32 villages in this area disappeared from the large-scale maps of the Urals.

The impact of Three Mile Island

Until Chernobyl, the most serious nuclear power plant accident was that at Three Mile Island in 1979, and this changed the perception of nuclear power almost everywhere. From 1979, nuclear power plants were considered no longer as 'absolutely safe' in the US, but as 'potentially dangerous'. The independent inquiry, which was carried out in a very open way, presented the US government with more than 100 new safety safeguards for reactors. It was also proposed that future reactors 'should be located in areas remote from concentrations of population'. The new safety rules have made the cost of reactors much higher and no new nuclear power station has been constructed in the United States since 1979. But many other countries, including Britain and France, did not take the American misfortune seriously into consideration and did not amend their nuclear programmes.

The accident in Pennsylvania in 1979 produced a limited debate in the Soviet Union as well. *The China Syndrome* was among several American films shown there in the late 1970s and it engendered a new concern about safety amongst Soviet people. Prof Nikolai Dollezhal proposed a change in the current programme of siting nuclear reactors near large cities so that most were sited in future in Siberia. Prof Petr Kapitsa proposed that nuclear stations should be sited on remote islands. However, these criticisms of Soviet practice were rejected.

Prof Anatoly Alexandrov, the president of the USSR Academy of Sciences and an influential member of the 'nuclear lobby', at a special press conference for foreign journalists in Moscow (on December 18, 1979) categorically dismissed all doubts about safety and declared that atomic reactors belong to 'the safest industrial technologies' and they 'posed no threat to the environment or to the population' (*The Times*, December 20, 1979). No changes were made in the Soviet programme of building nuclear power stations near most big cities in the European part of the USSR. Unfortunately, neither the public, nor scientists who were not linked with a very secretive nuclear industry, were given the possibility of taking part in these debates over the siting of power stations.

Growing anxiety

There are many comments now by Western experts about the deficiency of the safety standards of the reactors of the Chernobyl type (they comprise about 60% of the Soviet reactors in operation or under construction). The absence of an extra containment structure, inadequate foundations, the location of the reactor and the operational controls in the same building, and the construction of several reactors practically under the same roof, for example, are obviously questionable 'solutions' even for non-experts. They all are based on the assumption that the reactors are absolutely safe. However, the Soviet reactors were never open to international safety inspection and there was never a serious debate about reactor safety in the Soviet Union in which, for example, Western opinion or domestic technical dissent could be represented.

Sweden is the first country in Europe where the future of nuclear energy was decided via a national referendum

There was an obvious need for a new debate on the energy issue well before the Chernobyl disaster. The problem of quality control was well-known. The construction of almost every power station was seriously delayed. Moreover, it was only natural that the Western 'anti-nuclear movement', which was widely publicised in the USSR, should make the Soviet public too very apprehensive about the rapid construction of nuclear power stations in densely populated areas. In the discussions prior to the 27th congress of the CPSU, environmental issues enjoyed a quite new prominence. The consequences of the Chernobyl accident make clear that this public apprehension was well justified.

The Ministry of Health prepared in the early 1970s an instruction about the proper location of nuclear power stations which took the health of the public into consideration. It stated among many other things that: 'nuclear power stations, as far as possible, should be located in an area of low population with good natural ventilation toward the leeward side with respect to populated areas. . . The hydrological conditions of the area should eliminate the possibility of radioactive materials entering ground water'. (*Atomnaya Energia* No 3 1975). As far as the Chernobyl nuclear power station is concerned these rules were entirely ignored. Several nuclear power stations were built near the main river and near the large artificial reservoir which serves as a source of water for Kiev and many other towns. A new town – Pripyat – was built just windward of the power stations.

The construction and running of nuclear power stations was and is a very complicated business involving many different ministries and state committees. The Ministry of Power and Electrification operates them. However, all problems relevant to the fuel cycle and reprocessing of spent fuel (sometimes for the extraction of plutonium as fuel in fast breeders) are under the strict control of the Ministry of Medium Machinery, a euphemism for the military branch of the Soviet nuclear programme. This makes all aspects of nuclear power operations top secret and makes it impossible to have local officials involved in their supervision.

Where next?

The Soviet Union did not have a really pressing need to accelerate nuclear generating power in the way that it did. At a meeting in Leningrad in May, Gorbachev made clear that the existing thermal power stations could improve their performance by modernisation. Even now coal-generated electricity is cheaper in many parts of the country, and the modernisation programme would make coal-produced electricity much cheaper than nuclear energy.

It is often assumed that the Soviet Union has no alternatives to nuclear power. The production of oil is in decline, most coal deposits are in Siberia and Kazhakstan and there are many environmental problems which now limit an increase in hydroelectric development in the European part of the USSR.

According to the new five year plan and the plan to the year 2000, the main increase in Soviet electrical output is expected from nuclear power. It projects that 40% of all electricity in the country will be generated in 2000 by nuclear power stations. It is now clear that these projects will need to be

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reconsidered. The Soviet Union continues to use energy in a very wasteful way and some simple conservation methods could improve the energy balance. Even if nuclear energy is persisted with, its costs are now bound to be much higher given new safety and environmental considerations that are bound to come into play. The Soviet Union, which is the largest country in the world, cannot afford to have a second disaster on the same scale as the one which happened on April 26. Indeed, a similar accident in Hungary or Switzerland would have virtually destroyed their economies.

Possible responses

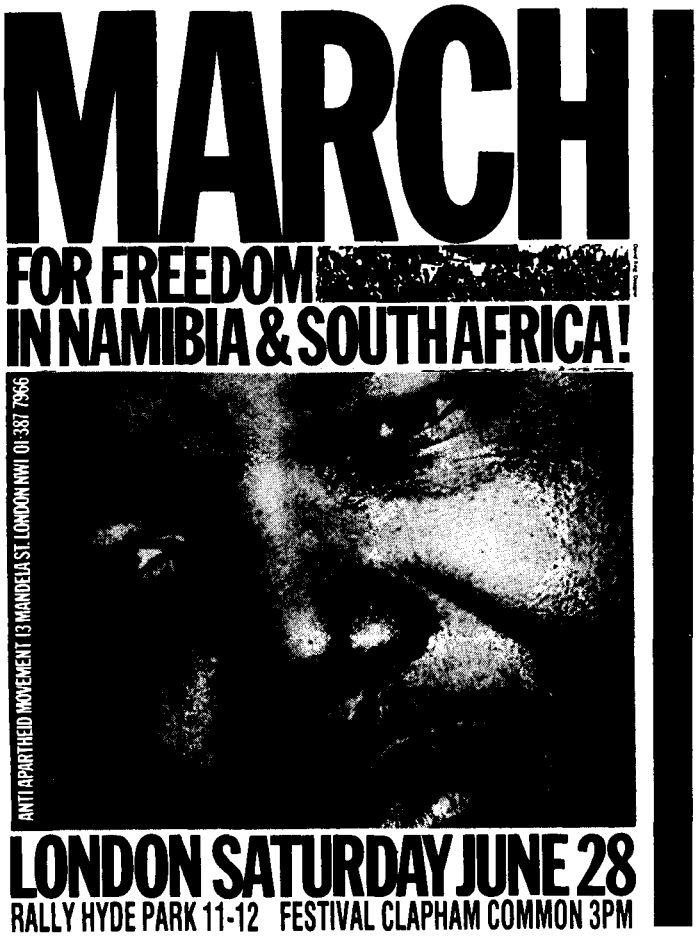
There are several possible ways of dealing with the consequences of the current crisis. One is the traditional selective release of very limited or distorted information and the continuation of the 'business as usual' approach to all other problems. It would probably save the face of many bureaucrats and scientists at different levels, but it would damage the credibility of the new Gorbachev policy of 'openness' and publicity, and public trust in the government.

There is a second way which could give Gorbachev and his colleagues the opportunity to test in practice their promise of frank discussion and the rejuvenation of leadership. Such a course would mean a purge of the Ukrainian leadership, which still remains a stronghold of the 'Brezhnev era', and also of the 'nuclear-industrial' complex, which is still dominated by very old men unable to introduce new ideas and approaches, and to facilitate the necessary international co-operation for Soviet science. It would also mean a streamlining of management for the energy programme.

In addition, the independence of the safety boards would need to be increased. Safety and health regulations need to have the force of law, not recommendations with the usual 'as far as possible'. Like the procuracy and courts which do not work on the basis of the priorities of the economic plans, the safety commissions should exist in most industries and they should be above the targets of the plan. At the 27th party congress, Gorbachev promised legislation which would allow individuals to file appeals in courts against unlawful actions by officials. Such appeals should be possible against administrative and industrial branches as well.

Then there is the third way of dealing with the crisis, which would increase not only domestic public confidence in their leaders, but also greatly improve the international image of the Soviet system as well. Article 5 of the Soviet constitution declares: 'Major matters of state shall be submitted to nationwide discussion and put to a popular vote (referendum).' This provision of the constitution has never been tested in practice, probably because the government always considered problems not 'major' enough to be decided by a popular vote.

Sweden was the first country in Europe where the future of nuclear energy was decided via a national referendum in 1980. It is clear that there is no more major matter in the Soviet Union than the decision about future energy policy. But if a referendum should take place, it must follow free and democratic debate and the possibility of all groups in society having access to all relevant information and a proper record of the performance of the Soviet nuclear energy industry. A referendum without dissent is a selection without choice. □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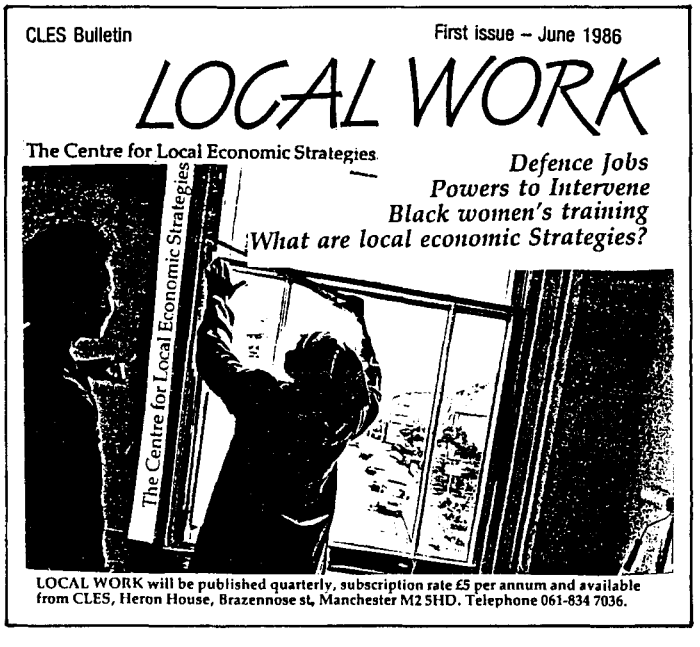
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Thatcher was thoroughly isolated in her support for Reagan's attack on Libya. Yet most people here and in Europe have come to accept the Thatcher/Reagan characterisation of Libyan terrorism.

THE GADAFY FACTOR
Thatcher and the terrorist threat

George Joffe

IN THE EUPHORIC aftermath of the local election successes for the Labour party and the undeniable evidence of Tory unpopularity in the bye-election results at West Derbyshire and Ryedale, it is easy to assume that the Thatcher era is drawing speedily to a close. After all, the electorate appears to have finally realised the inherent inability of Tory policies to deliver on their promises, as well as identifying their dangerous consequences. Most people in the bye-elections at least, so it is argued, in addition to their concerns over domestic matters, were shaken by the government's willingness to acquiesce in US demands for support over the Reagan administration's anti-Gadafy policy and that this, as much as any other factor, led to the Conservative electoral collapse.

It was not that people in Britain had any dispute with the underlying assumptions of US policy on 'Libyan-inspired terrorism', to cite a BBC tv newscast at the end of April. After all, we have already had our bruising experience of *that* reality in April 1984, when Yvonne Fletcher was killed in the St James' Square siege of the Libyan People's Bureau.

The real problem had been, in Liberal leader David Steele's words, that the British bulldog had become the American poodle. In other words, it was the fact that the British government tamely allowed the USA to use bombers based in Britain, ostensibly for NATO purposes, in the raid on Tripoli that caused the anger with Tory policies and the reverse at the polls.

The shift in opinion

No doubt this explanation of the government's electoral embarrassment is correct, although many other factors reflecting domestic concerns could, indeed must, have played more important roles in determining the results. However, if the analysis is correct, it conceals a disturbing truth about the Thatcher government's continuing ability to shape the agenda of public opinion and the media. It could still contribute to reversing its fortunes before the national elections that are now confidently expected to lead to its demise.

One very good example of this has been the way attitudes have changed since the US attack on Libya in mid-April. It is generally forgotten that, when the current brouhaha over Libya and terrorism began, at the beginning of the year, nobody except President Reagan and his close associates in the administration and, perhaps, some of the more gung-ho members of the British government really believed that Libya was responsible for the terrifying chronicle of terrorism in 1985 that had culminated in the appalling simultaneous attacks at Rome and Vienna airports at the end of the year.

American public opinion, it is true, was certainly predisposed to accept the president's claims, but in Britain and Europe scepticism was the more common response. Even as the dreary catalogue of ineffective US economic sanctions against Libya, followed by the provocative Sixth Fleet exercises in the Gulf of Sirte, unfolded, to culminate in the attacks on Sam-5 missile bases on the Libyan coast-

after the raids on Tripoli and Benghazi in mid-April the change in mood in the media, at least, gathered pace

line at the end of March, European public opinion and most European politicians seemed deaf to US entreaties for support.

It was only in the wake of that attack that, slowly at first, opinions began to change. After the raids on Tripoli and Benghazi in mid-April the change in mood in the media, at least, gathered pace, particularly as official sources in Washington and London confidently and incessantly asserted that Libya was indeed and self-evidently responsible for Middle Eastern derived terrorism.

Gadafy: he encourages such shows of open support.

As Mrs Thatcher and other members of her administration constantly harped on the theme of Libyan responsibility, European statespeople reluctantly began to fall into line and, by the Tokyo summit in early May – which was supposed to deal with economic issues but turned out to be a celebration of political unity amongst the 'Big Seven' – unanimity on the issue was complete. Libya stood condemned by communique and Western public opinion.

The extraordinary feature of this reversal of European and British public opinion is that it has been carried out by simple assertion. US pressure on European statespeople was, no doubt, intense and envoy after envoy from the White House has done the rounds of European capitals to persuade, cajole and, perhaps, even threaten on the issue. However, it has been Mrs Thatcher and her foreign secretary who have done most to force this change of heart throughout the EEC. Yet, in mid-April, she was decried and condemned throughout the continent for her compliance with the US actions against the Gadafy regime.

It was the constant repetition in international meetings of her message, with the guarantee of domestic support provided in large measure through uncritical reportage from the British media which, with a few honourable exceptions, were already predisposed to accept accusations of Libyan malevolence, that enabled the British government to provide the essential support for US arguments over terrorism and guarantee that Europe would eventually fall into line. It was a remarkable demonstration of Mrs Thatcher's determination to have her own way, against all the odds, and of the Tory sway over media percep-

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tions that provided her with the means to do it.

The new morality

Two factors seem to have contributed towards her success. The first is that there can be little doubt that Libya, like many other regimes around the world, has been involved in terrorism. However reprehensible though Libya's behaviour may be in itself, terrorism nonetheless now appears to be an established fact of international politics. In any case, under the newly established code of international morality that has moulded political behaviour since the Reagan administration came to power in 1980, it appears that in practice the terrorist act is not, in itself, reprehensible.

It is the purpose to which terrorism is directed that has become the moral guide. Thus actions against Palestinian refugee camps – in which the vast majority of people are innocent civilians – is morally acceptable, while Palestinian attacks on equally innocent civilians in Israel or elsewhere is not.

In this context, then, Libya automatically stood condemned because its involvement in *some* terrorist activity automatically implied its involvement in all terrorism – certainly that which emerged from the Middle East. To that was added the conviction that has been repeatedly emphasised by the Reagan administration over the Middle East but which Mrs Thatcher has also urged over Northern Ireland that no compromise can be made with the 'Men of violence' – and Colonel Gadafy clearly fitted into that category.

Most people today would probably implicitly accept both these assumptions, never questioning the moral imperative now applied to terrorism or disputing the self-evident simplicities of outright rejection of violence as part of modern political discourse. At the same time, they are usually unaware of the fact that, over the past decade, violent responses have tended to become the international norm – as the Falklands, Nicaragua or Grenada show. The system of international law as a source of primary recourse in settling disputes, so painfully built up over 300 years and embodied in the UN has become increasingly irrelevant.

Against this background of public perceptions, the remarkable change in public opinion that Mrs Thatcher's government has wrought is, perhaps, less surprising. Nonetheless, the inadequate evidence – give the growing evidence of Syrian involvement in recent terrorist attacks – to support her conviction of total Libyan responsibility could have led to some healthy scepticism. It did not almost certainly because, imperceptibly, we have all be swayed into a series of simple assumptions about the Middle East, and about Libya, in particular, that made the claims put forward by the Reagan administration easily palatable.

As the *New York Times* put it shortly after the bombings, we were seeing 'justice done' and, as Edward Said pointed out in a recent article, the word terrorism has been given a new series of connotations. It is now, he argued, '. . . a word which has totally simplified and streamlined official as well as private American attitudes to the world . . . Terrorism overrides history, politics, economics and above all common sense.' And the St James' Square incidents have convinced British public opinion, at least, that Libya is indeed the source of all terrorist attacks.

it is the purpose to which terrorism is directed that has become the moral guide

The real issue

What is really disturbing about Mrs Thatcher's propaganda success on the Libyan issue, however, is that, by its very simplicity, it has excluded the real issues. By implicitly arguing that terrorism can be treated symptomatically, as it were, and by cauterising the Libyan regime, it suggests that no more need be done. Yet, as any British government must have realised in Northern Ireland, terrorism can only really be countered if its underlying causes are addressed.

Indeed, the Middle East has already demonstrated this. The burst of terrorism in the early 1970s, organised by the PLO on that occasion, petered out once other opportunities of achieving Palestinian objectives appeared. And terrorism has reappeared in the Middle East largely because, once again, the Palestinians have been reduced to hopelessness, while Lebanon has been persuaded and pushed into internecine destruction by Israel with US backing.

The frustrations of the Middle East have been compounded by Western indifference and arrogance. The refusal of the US administration to even consider official contacts with the PLO on the grounds that it espouses violence – hardly surprising in a national liberation movement, as the Reagan administration would willingly agree in the case of its own proteges in Nicaragua – while the *USS* Jersey mercilessly shelled the Chouf in 1983 and Israel was protected from diplomatic condemnation despite its behaviour in Lebanon has effectively convinced the Arab world that it is themselves who are the victims of terrorism. It may be an emotional over-reaction and it may even be inherently unjustifiable, but in the Middle East it is the accepted view and, against that background, terrorism is inevitable.

If only the West would put as much effort into dealing with the crisis it has helped to create in the Middle East as it has into condemning Libya, terrorism could really be eradicated for it would have become irrelevant to the political process there. And what of Libya? Well, insofar as Libya's undoubted involvement in terrorism reflects its domestic tensions and since, in the Middle East, it is a very minor partner in the complex conflicts of the region, a resolution of Middle Eastern problems would then restore Libya to its proper dimensions and leave the Gadafy regime to face the anger of its own dissidents alone.

The fact is, however, that this will not happen. Instead, the orthodox view on terrorism enunciated by Mrs Thatcher and President Reagan and now uncritically accepted by European politicians and the media, will continue to hold sway. Libya, the easy target, has now apparently been vanquished and any future acts of terrorist vengeance will be met by further attacks. European governments (except perhaps Greece), whatever their real opinions, will now be trapped by the logic inherent in their own acceptance of US claims over Libya's role in international terrorism into providing tacit support.

Now the stage seems to be prepared for a similar confrontation with Syria, although the consequences of this will be far more serious and will only envenom international relations for the foreseeable future. Yet the logic is there, if Libyan terrorism is to be met and vanquished by military retaliation – on the dubious grounds of 'self-defence' – then the same must apply to any other state shown to be involved, whatever the consequences.

Nor are we in any position to resist such logic, for, having so easily accepted the Thatcherite view over Libya, the same argument cannot easily be rejected in the future. What is worse is that, in the fullness of time, the government will be able to claim that it, at least, stood firm for right and might and thus wring a propaganda victory from its moral decline. □

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photo: Andrew Ward/Report

Glenys Kinnock (left) and Joan Ruddock launch One World.

AID CRUSADE

Interview with Glenys Kinnock and Joan Ruddock

Since 1984 public concern about poverty and famine in the Third World has increased dramatically in Britain. Organisations such as Band Aid have helped to push the politics of aid and development into the limelight. Last month, Glenys Kinnock, Joan Lestor and Joan Ruddock publicly launched One World, a new campaign which aims to introduce a socialist perspective into the development arena. Here Glenys Kinnock and Joan Ruddock talk to Sally Davison.

Why do you think there has been a ground swell of public opinion about aid issues in the last 18 months?

Glenys Well obviously there was the reaction to Michael Buerk's film – it was the first time that we had sat and watched live satellite pictures, in our own homes, of people dying. And then we discovered in the subsequent days and weeks that we couldn't get food to those people. And then there was the Band Aid initiatives. Pictures of the starving and the sounds of the pop singers combined to spark off an amazing response.

Joan There was also a political opportunity there – people had been absolutely sickened by the whole direction of the Thatcher government in Britain. There is a great deal of misery and distress in our own communities, and perhaps people suddenly recognised that there were even worse things happening elsewhere. There is a political climate of protest in Britain, protest in Europe. And people feel the need to link with protest in the Third World.

Live Aid and Band Aid were obviously very important in acting as a focus for the emotions that had been aroused.

Joan I think they allowed people to do something. It wasn't insignificant that people got up and wrote out their cheques, or collected money in their neighbourhoods and sent it in. That must have involved millions of people who had never answered a coupon in any newspaper or magazine. So people did positive things. They saw that there was a need for support and that it could be done by money. But what we, and others, are left to pick up is the feeling that people have done that – but what can they do now? Consciousness has been raised, the feeling has stuck, and there is a need for ongoing support. There is a real sense that there has to be change, because otherwise it will just go on like this, and probably next time famine will be less newsworthy. Famines will continue, but you can't just keep repeating Live Aid. You can't keep hitting those kind of heights.

Glenys There is a danger of what the agencies are already called aid fatigue. I already sense that there is some of that. If the rains fail this year, the people of sub-Saharan Africa will be in the same situation again. If that happens we cannot keep on saying that we have to find the resources for emergency food aid – there have to be commitments of another kind to long-term strategies to break the cycle of poverty and deprivation.

You could say that Band Aid did more than just make money – it kept a momentum going. It didn't end with Live Aid last summer. They have managed to build on that by, for example, launching Sport Aid. That is bringing in a different constituency. So although it is not like a typical mass campaign, it has a sense of giving people different things to

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do, even if the net result is always just to collect money. They have prolonged its life more than you might have expected.

Glenys Yes, and don't knock it. I think that some people have implied that that is what we were doing. Certainly not – what we are doing is seeing the necessity to build on what they have done. We are full of admiration for what they have done. But we recognise that people have been asking where do we go from here. This is what has perplexed them. Band Aid raised public awareness and we are offering answers to some of the questions that people are asking.

Are you saying that Band Aid had the fun, but now we have got to get the politics. Is there any way these areas could feed off each other more than that, rather than Band Aid just being like a conveyor belt which feeds people to you?

Joan I doubt if the half the population which got involved in Band Aid are all going to come to us. And if they did we would be totally overwhelmed and would probably become ineffectual. But the importance is that a constituency of support for positive measures has been created and they were part of creating it. We are trying to pick up a proportion of that interest, as a political organisation – because that is what we are.

Why do you think it is that up until now the labour movement and the Left have been so pathetic on these issues, and that it was left to organisations like Live Aid to start campaigning?

Joan I think it is an extremely interesting question because at the very beginnings of the labour movement, internationalism was much more to the fore than it has been in more recent decades. In the very early stages people were so oppressed that there was a kind of identification with people who were without food. But as we moved away from that to a situation where it was all about collective bargaining and trying to get to the next rung in the ladder, and that kind of thing, the labour movement became very inward-looking. We are so concerned with trying to improve very narrow interests within Britain that we fail to see what's going on elsewhere. I also think, without being too harsh, that there has been an element of racism. The whole history of colonialism has produced its own kind of results in the labour movement, some of which have been very negative.

Glenys I agree. But it is encouraging that the response of the trade unions to One World has been very, very positive. There has been a recognition that we can make arguments about mutual benefit. That is one of the differences now. We are now one world and our survival depends on each other – we will all live or die together. It makes it possible to take the argument to people who might otherwise argue that charity begins at home. But we are not simply appealing to self-interest. We always say that we believe it is morally unacceptable in our world that there should be even one death, from hunger. This is especially clear in the weeks after Chernobyl.

Joan I believe the kind of support we are seeing from trade unions now would accept a greater sharing. That is the explanation of why we are a socialist organisation. We are working for basic principles: justice and fairness. And we are not finding ourselves alone.

Could you say more about the special role of One World?

Glenys We exist to educate, to provide a clear socialist view of development issues. We are not a charity and we are not an aid agency of any kind, although we have links with the agencies and have received tremendous support from them. Many of them have been involved in public education work about these issues.

What is different about the way in which you are raising the issues? Did you sit down and think, 'we need a socialist campaign'?

Glenys Yes, that is right. The agencies can't make political points as strongly as us. We are saying a lot of things that they would like to.

Joan All sorts of people in very 'respectable' organisations are coming up to us from all over the place and saying they are absolutely thrilled, because they can't do this themselves. If you are burdened by the constraints of the charity commissioners, you just cannot go into overt politics. We have started in overt politics. That creates a new dimension.

Yes, but charities are restricted not just in that they can't be party political – they can't be political at all in their campaigns. There are two things you could have decided to do – one would be to launch a specifically socialist campaign as you have done. The other would be to decide, as socialists, that what is needed is a broader, mass campaign.

Joan Certainly from working in CND I know the fantastic strength of being a mass movement – I think that has been our credibility, our claim to have a strong political voice in Britain. But I also know the difficulties of a mass movement because to make it democratic requires it to become, by definition, I'm afraid, bureaucratic. You get into a very complex organisation. That isn't the only model. The way we are hoping to work – and obviously none of us know because we have only just started out on this experiment – is by offering a perspective that focuses on what we as a group are able to work on – and that is defined as the labour movement.

At the same time we are trying to provide, to a certain degree, a resource which other people can use to extend their operations in this field. We won't have to gather everybody into any kind of central organisation. Our aim is to help people to equip themselves to argue the case more, to make links, to take One World as a base for discussion within existing organisations. To keep setting up new organisations that mean that people have to acquire all kinds of commitments to monthly meetings, to being secretaries, or whatever, is not necessarily the right thing. There is already a mass of organisations; and the political parties are all gearing up for another general election. I think any attempt to establish a mass organisation along traditional lines would not only be totally impossible; it might be the wrong thing to do.

To be a mass campaign doesn't necessarily imply all that paraphernalia; it means a commitment to the idea that somehow one involves the mass of the people. There is a need to involve people not just through going to meetings, and finding out about issues, but also through feeling that they are part of a national movement for change.

Glenys We are fast becoming a mass movement with the amount of interest that has been generated.

You have taken on the responsibility of taking the kind of feeling there is one step further. What if the mood is that people want to take it further than that – that they actually want a mass campaign?

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Glenys Well, so be it.

Joan If they do I will be very happy. But we don't want to get into a situation where we are arguing about what our spokespeople should be saying, who has the authority, to whom are we accountable. My hope – and it's the hope of all of us in One World – is that we are just not going to get into that business at all. We have come together because we are of like mind, we have got a perspective which has been declared. We have managed to persuade some trade unions that they agree with it and support it and they are prepared to put some money into it. We are taking it from there.

So we are talking about a pressure group, and an educational campaign?

Joan We are trying to make a contribution to a change in the culture. Because if the culture were changed – and Band Aid began that shift – then it would become possible to have these issues at the front of political debate. It will become a major issue at election times, which has never happened before. And then the mass of the people will acquire a political opportunity because they are actually then asked to make political choices.

To what extent are you trying to change the Labour party? Or is it a case of helping to win support for the Labour party?

Glenys Anybody watching us and reading about us understands that we are Labour party people. And the Labour party is the only major political party that has policies which are in line with One World. We support the party's development cooperation policies and we will work for the implementation of our socialist perspective on the issues.

You don't see it as something that is actually trying to change the Labour party as well?

Joan It is not aimed at changing party policy. But as in so many areas, the policy may be excellent but people may not know what it is. People may not have been interested, or may have other much greater priorities. So it is really lifting the profile of these issues within the labour movement.

The style of One World shares some features with other recent developments in the Labour party. Is your campaign part of a new direction for the Labour party, a new way of putting your ideas across?

Glenys It is a new direction insofar as it is the first time that this kind of movement has existed. But it is also special because we are bringing together a lot of people in the movement. We are not about just one thing. For instance Joan is closely identified with disarmament. This in itself conveys a message.

Joan Also, I think, we do represent our times. You know we are not cynically setting out to say this is a kind of PR package – what we are doing is right because it has some political gain; we are people whose whole philosophy has been formed in a certain way. And there are millions of people like us, who have the same kind of life experiences as us, going through the 60s when we had so much, and there was so much freedom and hope in our world. And then coming down to the agony of the 80s when everything had changed – and we are seeing change on so many fronts. I think we are bringing all that together. So we are just part of what is happening in the broad left movement in Britain.

Glenys It's about striking a chord.

You have produced quite a lot of material about women in the Third World. And it was three women that publicly launched the campaign. Is this an important part of One World?

Joan Well, we are not all women. It just happened that several of us were involved in the campaign because of our specific roles and commitments. But I am sure we all shared the pleasure of knowing that it was women on the platform, and reversing the still traditional position that the spokespeople of an organisation have to be men.

Do you think that reflects that women are more involved in this area?

Glenys Well, they are more involved as carers, anywhere, we all know that! But most of the charities are headed up by men. You can't say that this is an area that has been the preserve of women, because it hasn't been partly because it has been, an area for 'experts'.

Joan It may be useful to women in the sense that it is women who traditionally are the grassroots, the organised collectors for these organisations. That is where the women are playing their part.

Glenys And in charity shops. . . Who has ever seen a man serving in an charity shop?

Joan That's right. Certainly the people who have come to my door have always been women. I think that one aim in all our lives is to help women to have the confidence to participate more fully, when they thought they were only there to make the tea.

Glenys And you can make connections with women in the Third World. Of course the differences between us are enormous. But these points can be made if you do it sensitively. If there is one thing that men can shake hands on anywhere in the world, it is that the situation for women is that they come last and get least.

Joan It is fair to say that in the very poorest areas of Britain today women are again in the position of trying to be the person that takes the least out of the household because they are managing on so little money. The sense of being the one who must ultimately make the sacrifices for the rest of the family is understood in Britain.

Glenys Women want to see the results of their work in their cooking pots and their children's skin and their children's education; it is the same all the world over – if they are asked 'do you want food for that cooking pot or bullets and bombs' then women the world over give the same answer. Investing in women is investing in the whole future of the developing world. At the Decade For Women conference they said that women's lives had in fact deteriorated over the last 10 years. I was struck too by a recent observation in a UNICEF report that 'farmer' is in fact not a masculine noun. And then you realise that it is the women who have been working in the fields, have been growing food, doing all of this. And it has been unrecognised, it has been invisible. So women will be part of our grassroots development, there is nothing more grassroots than women in development work. □

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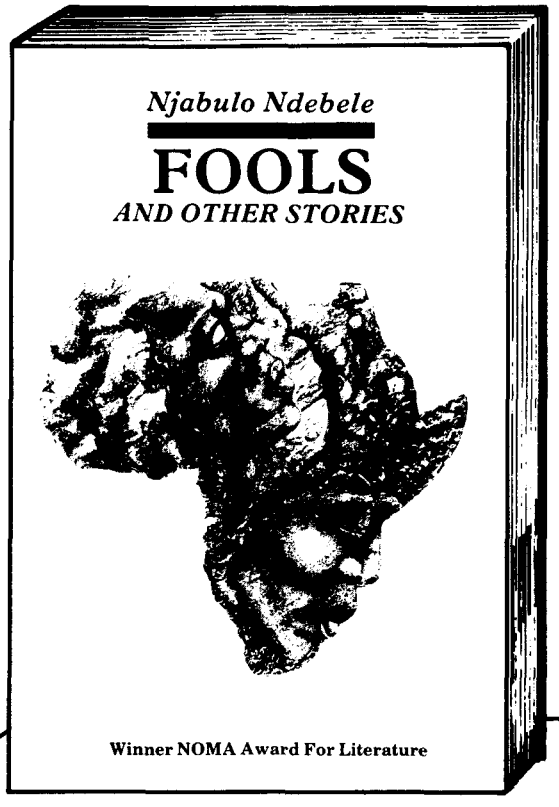

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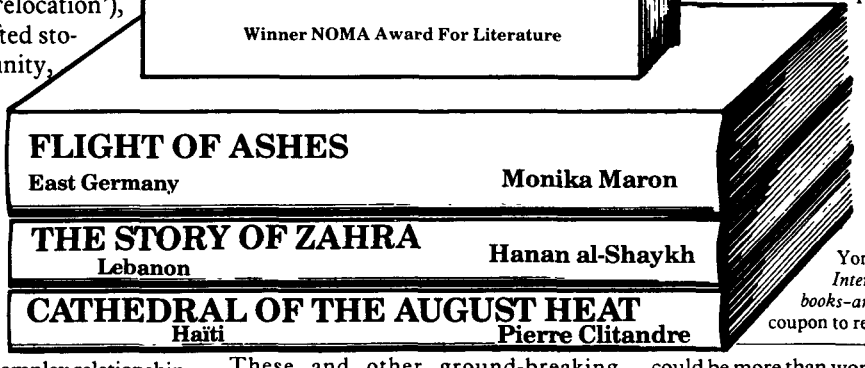

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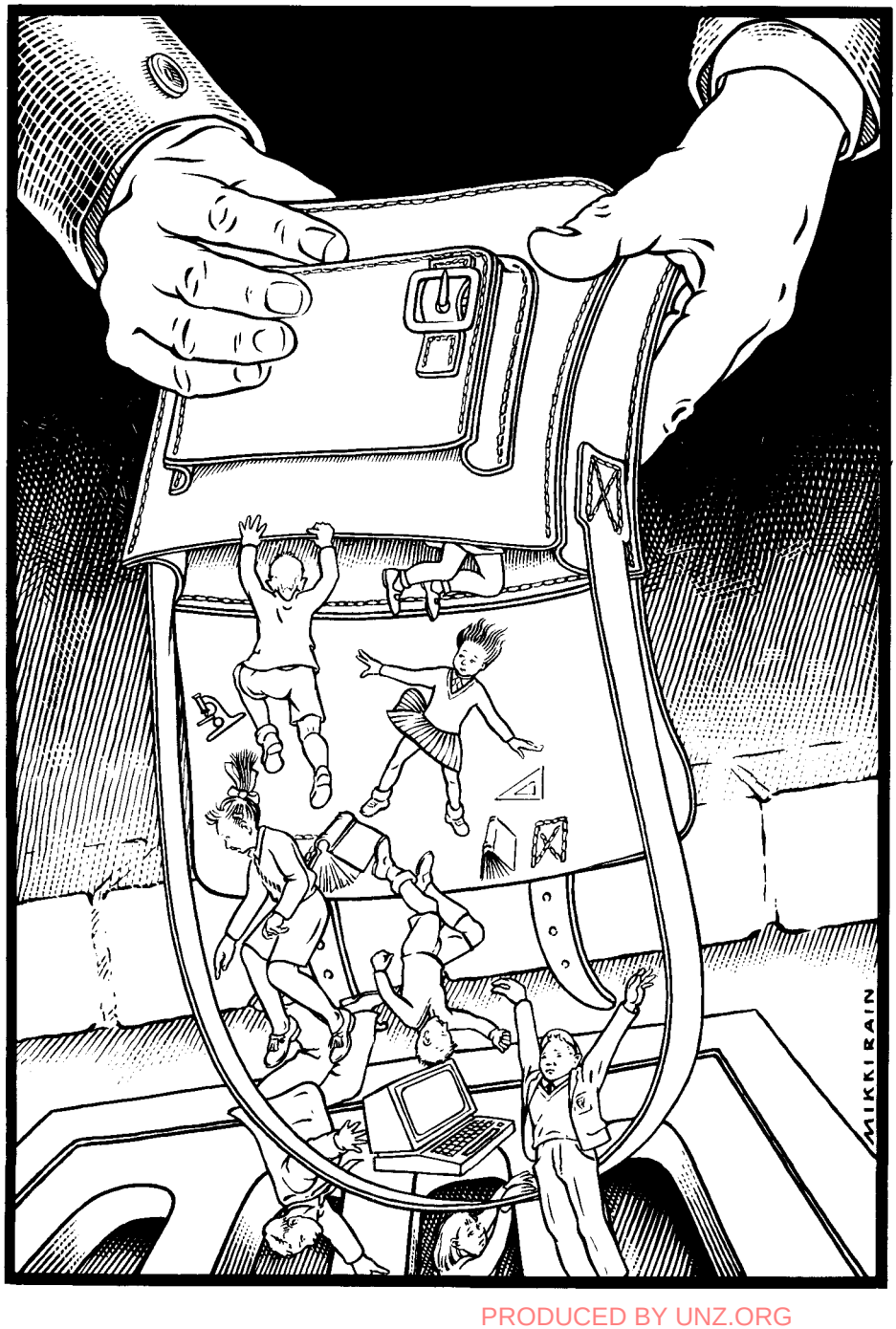
The Battle of the Blackboard

Brian Simon

Education has become a high-profile issue. Thatcher thinks it might be an election-winner. But 1986 is not 1979. This time the Tories can't blame everyone else but themselves.



EDUCATION SUDDENLY catapulted to become a major issue in early March. The immediate cause triggering public concern was a clearly inspired leak from the prime minister's office – that to demonstrate her inflexibility in pursuing undeflected a Thatcherite radical programme, the prime minister was proposing to include, as key features of the Conservative party's election manifesto, first, a voucher or 'credit' system 'which would enable parents to choose between the state and private systems', and second, 'direct grant primary schools (ie, centrally funded) in inner cities' (*The Times*, March 10). The striking feature of this particular leak is that no other major issue was singled out for treatment. The focus was on education.

This briefing, variously reported, together with Keith Joseph's announcement of his impending retirement, made in early February, sparked an immediate power struggle for the succession, and a free market for a proliferation of 'radical' proposals – mostly emanating from the right wing of the Tory party.

If the leaks were the immediate cause of the succeeding flurry of activity, these themselves can be explained in terms of the growing crisis within the Tory party following the Westland affair, culminating in the resignations of Heseltine and Brittan with the consequent slump in Tory party support as reflected in the opinion polls. In this situation, the Tory leadership was, from early March, clearly casting around for a set of populist issues which, they believed, could be used to win back support.

Education was then conceived to be just such an issue, an attitude explicable in view of the undeniable popular success of the anti-public education campaign led by Rhodes Boyson which played an important part in the first (1979) return of the Thatcher government. Partly as a result of the teachers' action, education has been a simmering issue throughout the whole of the past year. Could not the Tories now seize the initiative by again singling out education as a major plank in the fight for a third term for Thatcher, needed, she claims, to enable her to complete her work and put Britain back firmly on the capitalist road for the foreseeable future?

Alienation of teachers

But the situation in education today differs rather fundamentally from that in 1979. Public education has been through its worst year in its entire history, and many

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now hold that the electoral reverses of May 8 can, in part, be attributed to this situation. The main cause of the traumatic experiences education has suffered during the last year lies in the effects of a whole series of government inspired initiatives and attitudes. Among these is the government's approach to teacher's pay and conditions of service, leading directly to the year-long teachers' action. This has only recently been resolved and is, indeed, likely to be renewed at a new level, unless the government is prepared to make serious concessions.

As a result of this action, which took forms that have brought into question many of the voluntary activities of teachers taken for granted in the past, those working in the schools increasingly feel that things can never be the same again. In spite of the recent agreement, the entire profession is profoundly alienated from government policies, personalities and attitudes. This goes far beyond the long-drawn battle on the salaries issue; though few deny that teachers' pay has been savagely eroded.

Equally, or perhaps even more important, the determined and relentless thrust towards central control, already far advanced in certain areas of activity, has alienated both local authorities and teachers, who see their traditional role in the educational 'partnership' being deliberately sabotaged in innumerable ways. Teachers resent being described as 'agents' for the 'delivery' of a centrally determined curriculum (Keith Joseph's words). They, and the local authorities, resent control being deliberately arrogated by the centre, the more so where government inspired initiatives seem to strike at the fundamental purposes of schooling, as widely accepted in the past. Both resent funding for curriculum reform being available only within the terms of government inspired initiatives (such as the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative – TVEI, or the Lower Achieving Pupils Project – LAPP), initiatives which appear to threaten the imposition of a new tripartite system *within* comprehensive schools.

the Tory leadership is clearly casting around for a set of populist issues which, they believe, can be used to win back support

Teachers also resent the continued implied negative evaluation of their work, and hence are in no mood to accept restructured 'conditions of work' which seek to impose as a duty what has previously been voluntarily offered and undertaken. Nor are they in any mood to accept the imposition of systems of 'appraisal', as now embodied in the Education Bill before parliament.

Over the last year a strong head of opposition has built up within the profession – given clear and dramatic expression in the deliberate snub accorded to Joseph at the NAS/UWT National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers conference at the end of March, with the totally silent reception his invited speech as minister. This mood also lies behind the rank and file revolt at the NUT conference over the same weekend, resulting in the resolution on non-co-operation in the preparation for the new secondary school examination, the CGSE: a standpoint also taken up officially by the NAS/UWT, and, more surprisingly, by the highly respectable and 'moderate' union, AMMA (Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association).

Growing divisions between schools

So government initiatives over the last year have found little support among teachers, nor, for that matter, among local authorities where the consistent limitation of financial resources is presenting them with a near impossible task in keeping their local systems operating in a viable manner. The rundown in terms of resources, especially for books and equipment (except in the favoured TVEI schools) is horrific – and now widely recognised. The way in which this situation is being used to increase differences, and so divisions, between schools even within specific local systems, was very clearly brought out in Margaret Jay's *Panorama* programme towards the end of March.

Schools in affluent areas now raise large sums directly from their pupils' parents to provide the needed equipment, now increasingly expensive. In the meantime schools in working class areas, without access to these moneys, deteriorate ever more dramatically, as was clearly shown on this programme. Such differences, incidentally, will now be considerably exacerbated as a result of the charity tax exemption measures of the March budget.

But it is not only teachers and local authorities who have been alienated; the indications are that parents are also on the move. The largest organised pressure group, the National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations, protested very sharply indeed last October in a mass confrontation with Keith Joseph about the state of the education service. Information collected between October 1984 and March 1985 from 89 local education authorities highlighted this particular issue. Finding that classes were increasing in size while the curriculum is narrowing and staff put under more and more stress, their survey[1] also reported that, 'parental funding is forming a sharply increasing part of school finances', leading to disadvantage for pupils in less affluent areas (*The Guardian*, October 22, 1985). They found that parents are now spending £40m a year to supplement state funding, much of it going, as the *Times Educational Supplement* reported, 'on the essential tools of learning such as textbooks, micros and even skeletons and cycle sheds, as well as the maintenance and painting of our crumbling schools'.

More recently, the same organisation has come out in full support of the teachers' unions in unanimously demanding the postponement of the new secondary school exam (GCSE) unless sufficient resources can immediately be made available – at a cost of £100m rather than the £20m now on offer (*The Observer*, April 6, 1986). Perhaps even more significant has been the mushrooming of parents' organisations, so far mainly in and around London, in support of the teachers' claims on the salaries and conditions issue. These include the All-London Parents' Action Group (ALPAG) and PRICE (Put Resources into Children's Education), the first parents' pressure group, based on the London Borough of Waltham Forest, to receive national recognition.

The context of the present crisis, then, differs profoundly from that of 1979. At that point, with their slogan 'Educashun isnt Wurking', the Tories could throw the blame on Labour, and of course, more generally, both on the teachers and on comprehensive education. But now the Tories themselves have had control for over six years. And the outcome is that the public system of education has been reduced to near chaos, with morale at an all-time low.

The two Tory answers

So, what is to be done? The proposals emanating from Downing Street, the DES and elsewhere have an air almost of desperation. The dominant impression conveyed is the search for some gimmick which can be presented as a panacea which

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will, somehow, put everything right. Vote Tory, and the sun will shine again; all will be well.

It's worth noting, in this connection, that in fact the whole 'discussion' that exploded before the May 8 elections was about what should be included in the manifesto for a general election which need not take place for some two years. It was not about immediate measures to restore confidence in the education system here and now. Though, of course, experience shows that sudden, top-down decisions may be taken at any moment, as they have been in the recent past.

Basically there appear to be two sets of proposals. Some hold these to be opposite in origin and intention. They emanate, on the one hand, from those who put their faith in privatisation and, on the other, from those seeking to accelerate current centralising tendencies and ensure a far more direct and powerful role for the central authority, the DES, MSC or whatever. The former pin their hopes on the operation of the market which, they believe, will somehow automatically reinforce 'good' schools (reflecting Thatcherite values) and extirpate the 'bad'. The latter believe that the key to success lies in a determined initiative to bring everything – the curriculum, the teaching profession, the structure and pattern of schooling – under the direct control of the centre; that is, fundamentally, of the politicians within the state apparatus (civil servants in the DES and MSC), and their 'masters' – the politicians from outside. One thing both have in common is the wish to downgrade, and severely to limit the role of the local authorities.

The privatisers

That the schools are already suffering from creeping privatisation is clear. This is evident from the figures already quoted as to the extent of parental funding within the state system.

But the privateers, of course, go much further than this, and derive support from the hard Right section of the Tory party. A junior education minister, Bob Dunn, though personally responsible for the well-being of the state sector, has persistently and unashamedly argued for overall privatisation of the nation's schools. 'Britain should move within the next 15 years to a system of separate and independent schools, responsive to market mechanisms', he was reported as saying last July (*The Guardian*, July 29, 1985). 'Schools need to be directly accountable to their customers, the parents and children', so that 'they prosper if they provide what the customer wants, and they close if they do not'.

This over-simple view, even if practicable, sounds too much like a recipe for chaos to gain much support – even from within the Tory party. More recently, however, more precise schemes have been canvassed. Significantly, only a few days before the educational explosion in the media, *The Times* featured a main article by one Oliver Letwin, until recently the prime minister's adviser on education and member of her 'policy unit'. Entitled 'Good Schools For All at Minimum Cost', the article took the Assisted Places Scheme (APS), brought in by the Thatcher government in 1980, as a model.[2] Government money is handed out to parents of children 'selected' for education at independent schools. This scheme was brought in large-

the proposals emanating from Downing Street, the DES and elsewhere have an air almost of desperation

ly to provide much-needed support for middle class schools, several of which were then on the verge of bankruptcy.

Letwin argues for what in effect would be a modified form of the voucher (or 'credit') system. All the privatisation schemes now being proposed use some form of voucher scheme, though in this case Letwin seems to envisage school fees being paid directly by the state – as is the case with the APS. Every child would have 'a fully assisted place', so each school can become 'a financially independent entity' with a capacity 'to raise funds automatically by attracting more pupils' (*The Times*, Feb 6, 1986). Parents would be expected to shop around to find the most congenial school which would, presumably, have to accept their children. Quite apart from the administrative problems any such scheme would inevitably encounter, such a scheme, if brought in, would inevitably lead to a hierarchisation of schools within local systems, and so to a further exacerbation of all the unacceptable and damaging features of existing creeping privatisation. Such, presumably, is the intention.

An impossible undertaking?

In spite of these problems, the pressure to move to ever more 'radical' forms of privatisation is unceasing. The notorious Institute of Economic Affairs, which has been propagating voucher schemes for a long period, published a paperback *The Riddle of the Voucher*, by Arthur Selden, early in March. This appeared 'with inspired timing' (as the *Times Educational Supplement* put it) only a few days after the press reports of March 3 informing us that Mrs Thatcher was looking again at education as a vote winner (*TES*, March 7, 1986). The 'radical' nature of this approach is made clear in the proposal that education should be totally removed from the 'culturally conservative' Department of Education to 'an enterprise-oriented agency such as the Manpower Services Commission' – a proposal known, according to the *Times Educational Supplement* 'to have some appeal to Mrs Thatcher and even more for her territorially ambitious Employment Secretary, Lord Young'.

In this scheme, parents are given a 'voucher' or 'credit' equal to the cost of an average child's state education which they could then 'cash' at the school of their choice. The net effect would be likely to be much the same as with Oliver Letwin's scheme, with which the Selden scheme has clear similarities.

Even more recently, the 'No Turning Back Group' of Tory MPs have announced publication of a pamphlet reported as making 'a new push to persuade the government to opt for radically different methods of paying for public education' (*Daily Telegraph*, March 31, 1986). They have apparently dropped the direct voucher plan, 'believing it would be politically unacceptable'. However their alternative, described as 'per capita payments to parents', amounts to precisely the same thing. These will enable parents, it is claimed, 'to encourage the type of schools to which they want to send their children'.

From all this it is surely clear enough that, already before the May 8 elections, a power struggle of some significance was going on, and that rightwing Tories now saw their opportunity. However, all is not plain sailing for these groupings. For one thing, the atmosphere has changed radically since May 8 – such schemes no longer look like vote winners. For another, voucher schemes and the like were widely discussed by the Right in the early 80s – a modified pilot scheme was in fact mounted in Kent which ran into endless trouble and was finally abandoned. Keith Joseph himself, unsurprisingly, was originally attracted to the idea and supportive. But close consideration persuaded him that such schemes were not viable (DES offi-

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cials are supposed to have played a part in this).

The latest flurry of activity around this issue has resulted again in a negative response from the Secretary of State. 'Sir Keith Joseph firmly slapped down the notion of a viable education vouchers scheme at a Tory local government conference attended by many of the party faithful', reported the *Times Educational Supplement* on March 7. Answering those promoting the scheme, who claimed that to put purchasing power in the hands of the 'consumers' would be a very simple operation, Joseph answered: 'It is not very simple, I assure you'. 'I would like to have gone down this path', he added, 'but I tell you that if you do, you need very long and very complex legislation'.

To destroy the fundamental basis and structure of the public system of education, built up through detailed legislation over the last 100 years and more – which is what the voucher proponents in fact are proposing (whether they realise it or not) – would be a great deal more than a major undertaking. It would involve uprooting the very foundations of what is, in fact, an enormous social enterprise – and to achieve highly controversial objectives. Such a step, as the *Times Educational Supplement* put it, would be an 'enormous gamble', while 'the short-term disruption, cost and political risk' are such that it seems likely 'once again, to make the government draw back' (March 7, 1986). More especially, it might be added, if they have a more attractive alternative policy.

Centralisation

In terms of practical politics, the more threatening policy is the alternative now strongly and openly pressed by Joseph and his 'second', the recently appointed Chris Patten. This is to accelerate the drive to more complete centralised control over the entire system. This clearly has the support of high DES officials, and meets their own long-term and independent push to focus power at the centre at the expense of the other so-called 'partners' in the system – particularly the local authorities and the teachers. The immediate rationale for such measures is that the country can no longer afford variety in our system. For a fully 'cost-effective' system (tax reductions, defence, law and order need the money) everything must be strictly controlled from the centre. What is needed is a single state system of education (not, of course, including the 'public' and 'independent' schools for their own children) – not a 'partnership' between the state and local 'systems'. It is increasingly clear that this is the intention, although ministers continue to pay lip-service to the concept of partnership (though now stressing that there are senior partners and junior, and that it is the function of the senior partners to take the decisions and determine action).

The drive to central control – and the reactions – have been analysed in earlier articles in *Marxism Today* (February 1980, September 1984). *The Times*'s original news item of March 10, which stated that Thatcher was considering a voucher or 'credit' system, also announced that 'direct grant primary schools' were being considered for the inner cities. Another, equally 'inspired' report on that day (*Daily Telegraph*, March 10) announced that 'the return of grammar and technical schools' and 'the creation of a new ministry to deal with education and training' were also being considered by the government – a veritable witch's brew seems to have been engendered. A main objective is to free schools 'from their local authority', to give direct grants from central government to 'popular' schools, and to force 'unpopular' ones to close.

the more threatening policy is the alternative now strongly and openly pressed by Joseph and his 'second', the recently appointed Chris Patten

Also included as being considered is the setting up of 'a string of technical schools for bright 11 to 18 year olds', – perhaps 20 of these to start within the main industrial cities. In addition some 50 to 60 'crown' schools may be established to act as models of excellence (although the Royal Family has been scarcely remarkable for their GCE successes). This latter scheme, 'a network of government-funded direct grant schools in inner city areas', has been presented as 'devised to head off Conservative rightwing pressure to introduce a voucher scheme for schools' (*Times Educational Supplement*, April 4).

The campaign rolls

The campaign to prepare the nation for this new assertion of centralised power and control – in defiance of the traditional mode of conducting education in this country on which the Tories (for instance RA Butler) used greatly to pride themselves – was launched on April 5. On this day, education once again provided the main news stories in the media. 'Cabinet Set on Schools' Shake-up', headlined the *Daily Telegraph* (April 5); 'Minister's warning of "yob society"'. 'Whitehall Spectre raised for Education' was how *The Guardian* appropriately headed Chris Patten's speech; 'Minister warns teaching union of case for central control'. Patten's speech to a relatively obscure teachers' union was, according to the *Telegraph*, 'widely understood' (by whom one wonders) 'to mean that the government could take a tighter control of the funding of state schools and leave fewer decisions to local authorities'.

In this speech (and it is unusual for a junior minister to hit the headlines), Patten was concerned to stress that, if the 'partnership' controlling education was not working, then 'additional leverage' would be required – this to be gained by extending the Education Support Grant system brought in recently, by which the government directly funds a variety of educational initiatives in place of local authorities. *The Guardian*'s report stressed that these grants might be massively increased so, in effect, greatly strengthening centralised control.

Three days later (April 8), in a special article by Keith Joseph in the *Daily Telegraph*, the Secretary of State, in diplomatic and somewhat convoluted language, reiterated this threat, while again paying lip-service to traditional approaches. Referring to local authorities, teachers, the churches and the government, he wrote, 'We are meant to be partners in a common cause'. But the government must take the lead. It aims at the establishment of 'a national school curriculum'. Further, the new (highly divisive and differentiating) secondary school examination, the GCSE, must be carried through as planned. In addition, teachers must be subjected to 'appraisal' (the bill now before parliament includes a clause giving the Secretary of State powers to insist on this). The government, he added, is 'impatient' for faster advances. Oddly, the main *Daily Telegraph* leader, positioned adjacent to this article, called for Keith Joseph's immediate retirement. He has announced he is going soon anyway, and 'What will have to be done in the end would be better done quickly'. (Is the leader writer calling for assassination? See *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 7.)

Be that as it may, a week later Keith Joseph was still there, and in an ITV interview came out very clearly with new objectives. The only way to win more

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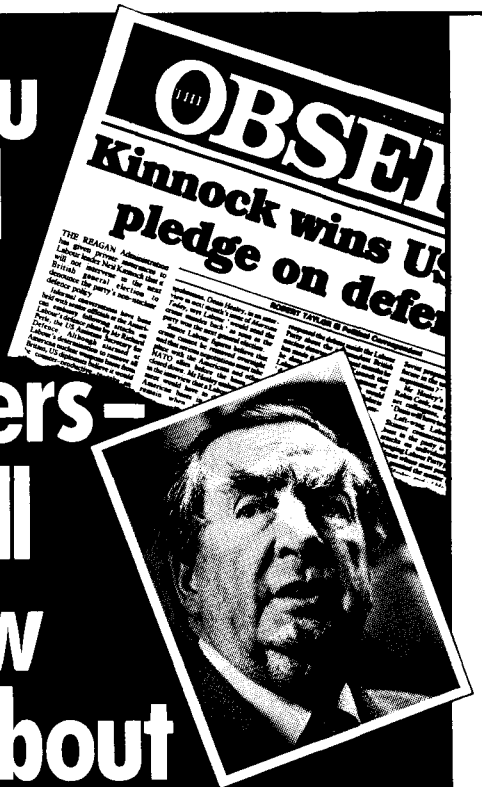

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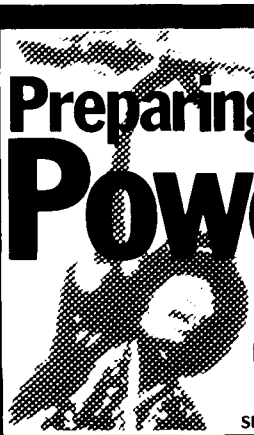

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WHAT PROSPECTS FOR THE LEFT?

A public discussion with speakers **Ken Livingstone** (Labour Party Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Brent East). **Martin Jacques** (Editor, Marxism Today) on Thursday, June 5th at 7.30pm at Anson Road School, Anson Road, Willesden, London NW2

Sponsored by Marxism Today Organised by Willesden CP

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funding for education, he is reported as saying, 'would be to increase government control of how the money was spent by individual local authorities' (*Daily Telegraph*, April 14).

Not content with this, only a few days later (April 16) the stakes were upped when Sir Keith announced that his department had a plan 'to take central control of polytechnics and college funding' – this being now, of course, the responsibility of local authorities; and, the report goes on, this idea 'was only one among many' being examined in his department's 'review of the possibility of using direct grants to give the government greater control of educational priorities' (*The Guardian*, April 16). Commenting on the inspired leaks, hints, and statements that have flooded the press recently, the *Times Educational Supplement* reflected that all these 'have a common theme', the prime minister's 'deep concern about education; her belief that it is a big election issue, and her desire to produce gimmicky remedies which make the maximum impact for the minimum money' (April 4).

Joseph's successor

'None of this, however', (the *TES*'s comment goes on) 'has much to do with the real problems of pupils, teachers and parents in the stress areas of the big cities. It is the existing schools that have to be made to work better'. But the education system is now, it seems, up for grabs. As already mentioned, Keith Joseph, perhaps undiplomatically, announced his impending retirement as long ago as early February. The *Daily Telegraph* is not the only paper suggesting he goes quickly. Ronald Butt, inveterate rightwing propagandist of the *Times*, heads a full article demanding 'radical' solutions 'Why Sir Keith should go now' (March 27).

The main contenders appear to be Lord Young (especially if it is decided to unify education and training in a new department)[3], the present junior minister, Chris Patten, and the darling of the Right, the egregious Rhodes Boyson. To replace Sir Keith by Dr Boyson, says *The Observer*, 'would be like putting an arsonist in charge of a blazing building'. However, as we have seen in Libya, Thatcher has a predilection for blazing buildings, so why not fan the flames? Patten, probably the most serious contender, has attempted, with a flood of carefully (and sometimes diplomatically) composed speeches, to heal some of the breaches which have opened out during the last year. Holding what he calls 'the rather old-fashioned view that the family, organised religion and education are the main foundations of the moral state of the nation', he believes firmly that the most important role of education lies in its function of 'holding together the social fabric of society and ensuring its moral health' (*Daily Telegraph*, April 12). There speaks the fledgling Tory statesman. Centralised control, of course, could be perceived as assisting this process. Education has always been recognised historically by Tory politicians and philosophers as a (the?) key factor in the maintenance of social control (and this, we have already seen, is a major objective of high DES officials; see 'Breaking School Rules', *Marxism Today*, September 1984).

The rescue of education

There are, of course, other contenders, including Peter Walker, Kenneth Baker, Kenneth Clarke and others – names widely canvassed following the election disasters of May 8 when it was seen as necessary to attempt a completely new start. The outcome is unpredictable, but may be known by the time this article is published. But whatever the result, the threat to the public system of education, as we have known it, is becoming very clear. Whoever wins this particular race, education is likely to suffer; though the Centre Forward group of 'moderate' Tories, and Mark Carlisle, the previous Secretary of State, are now throwing their weight behind a policy of more generous support for the public system of education.

the outcome of the power struggle now under way is unpredictable

What can call a halt to all this? Clearly the next election will be vital (and it now appears that even Thatcher's Barnet constituency may be vulnerable, specifically on the education issue, as reported by Maureen O'Connor in *The Guardian* recently). But of course action is already being taken along the lines discussed in this article, and we may expect further measures, possibly combining both privatising and centralising objectives.

In this situation what is urgently needed is a great, popular campaign in defence of the public system of education, and here the Labour party has made an effective bid to take the high ground in Radice's recent education statement (May 6), to be followed by further initiatives. None of the proposals now being canvassed within the Tory party will do anything to improve existing schools, and it is these that need support and encouragement. If confidence is to be restored, and the schools and teachers provided with attainable and worthwhile objectives, the outstanding requirement is to overcome the sense of alienation widespread in the education service; to provide the necessary resources to put the schools in working order, to ensure the long-term solution to the problem of teachers' salaries by generous action, and to cease imposing or threatening a series of centrally inspired initiatives in the desperate search for a panacea.

Bodies uniting mass organisations, for instance the Council for Educational Advance, are stirring into action; parents and their organisations, as we have seen, are also on the move. The Labour party has finally emerged committed to a generous policy of renewal. In his presidential address at the NUT conference at the end of March, Bob Richardson called for a campaign in defence of the public system of schools – the teachers and the trade unions have a key part to play in any such movement. The local authorities and their organisations are increasingly disenchanted with the trend in government policies which directly threatens their responsibilities and their capacity to carry these through effectively.

All these, if they act together, dispose of considerable power and influence. But this needs organisation and leadership. The initiative must be wrested from the two factions of the Tory party – the right and the (so-called) left wing – who seem now to be making the running. Education is too valuable and too important to be made the shuttlecock in inner battles within the Tory party. Most of those concerned do not even send their own children to the schools they are squabbling over, and disorientating. The need now is to rescue education from these predators. I believe it can be done. □

[1] The State of Schools in England and Wales, NCPTA £1.50.

[2] See 'Education and the Right Offensive' *Marxism Today* Feb 1980 for an analysis of this scheme.

[3] Lord Young has recently announced officially that: 'There is not going to be a Department of Education and Training. It isn't going to happen.' He also denied having 'territorial ambitions' to take on the post of education secretary (*Times Education Supplement*, May 2, 1986).

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WOMEN Alive

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JULY
5TH
6TH 1986

A SUMMER EVENT FOR WOMEN

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WOMEN Alive

AT LAST

A MAGAZINE OF THE LEFT THAT TAKES FEMINIST CONCERNS SERIOUSLY

NEW SOCIALIST

New Socialist stands for socialist politics fundamentally transformed by belonging to, and speaking to, the constituencies of women, gays, blacks and greens. Michèle Barrett and Rosalind Coward have just joined the magazine as associate editors.

On sale at Women Alive is the bumper summer issue. On the Central Books stall you can also catch up on recent back issues too, like May's roundtable discussion on Feminism and Class Politics and June's articles on images of masculinity and the politics of breastfeeding.

90p, but subscribing is cheaper – three free issues plus 11 issues a year cost only £8.80. For full details write to New Socialist Room W314, Labour Party, Freepost, London SE17 1BR (No stamp needed).

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7 DAYS

International Women's Day Issue

The knockbacks are many but sisterly strength is resisting the blows

Woman power

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WOMEN live

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DISABLED ACCESS GUIDE
FOOD AND DRINK

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22 TRANSPORT AND VENUE INFORMATION

THIS PROGRAMME IS AVAILABLE ON CASSETTE TAPE FOR BLIND WOMEN. PLEASE RING WOMEN ALIVE 01-251 4406 FOR A COPY.

This programme was put together by *Kate Steele* and *Jane Taylor*, with help from the Women Alive Co-ordinating Group and Marxism Today

Advertising by *Mel Cook* and *Sylvia Tata*

Published by Women Alive

Designed by *Katherine Gutkind* and *Lee Robinson*

Typeset by *Type Generation*

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Photos *Format Photographers*

Illustrations *Paula Youens*

TIMETABLE

SATURDAY

9.30am-10.30am	REGISTRATION *(Coffee, tea, snacks available)*
10.30am-12.30pm	SESSIONS
10.30am-12.30pm	*Filmshowings:* Women and History
12.30pm-2.00pm	LUNCH and PRACTICAL SESSIONS Body Conditioning/Keep Fit Stalls, Exhibitions, Discussions . . .
2.00pm-4.00pm	SESSIONS
4.00pm-4.30pm	TEA BREAK
4.30pm-6.30pm	SESSIONS
4.30pm-6.30pm	*Filmshowings:* Women and Work
7.30pm	Entertainment: *Women Alive And Kicking* at The Camden Centre, Kings Cross. *(with evening meal available)*

SUNDAY

10.00am-10.30am	REGISTRATION *(Coffee, tea, snacks available)*
10.30am-12.30pm	SESSIONS
10.30am-1.00pm	Women and The Built Environment (I)
10.30am-12.30pm	PRACTICAL SESSIONS *Filmshowings:* Women, Health and Sexuality Rights Advice sessions
12.30pm-2.00pm	LUNCH and PRACTICAL SESSIONS Poetry-reading Self Defence Stalls, Exhibitions, Discussions . . .
2.00pm-4.00pm	SESSIONS
2.00pm-4.00pm	*Filmshowings:* Women in Protest

Late in 1984 a group of Communist Party women started talking about the idea of a national event for women. Women's lives are changing: both for the worse (with poverty, violence and cutbacks in services) and for the better (more widespread acceptance of women's right to work, to equal pay and independence). Within the women's liberation movement political divisions have been overlaid with divisions of race, dis/ability and sexuality. And feminism has been forced to cope with the increasing awareness of the complexities of women's experiences and values, from abortion and motherhood to economic strategies and political parties. But while the women's movement has fragmented, it has spawned a richness of culture and writing that has greatly contributed to the continued struggle for women's recognition and independence.

We were aware that the historic conferences of the '70s could not be replaced with 'our' event, and we do not claim to be able to organise *the* women's liberation conference of 1986. But we have felt that it is both legitimate for us to organise a women's event, and also a logical extension of our political commitments as feminists to strengthening feminism and women's intervention in politics.

We felt deeply that there is a need for a women's forum that would draw together women and push forward feminist debate and thought on a wide range of issues. Our ideal has been to provide that space for many different women and organisations to contribute to and gain from; and where women's experiences are not ghettoised but genuinely brought together and involved.

We have also been aware of our own shortcomings. As able-bodied, mainly (but not totally) white, youngish women, we have not always been sufficiently aware of what is required to fully represent all women's needs. But we have been deeply committed to trying to overcome our limitations; and as Communist women we have made many contacts with different organisations, movements and individuals that we know will contribute to Women Alive having the widest possible appeal.

Women Alive has been an immense effort and expense to organise (we would have loved a GLC grant!). And it has been beset by problems, from finding a suitable venue (which is still not ideal), to finding enough money to fund it. We are grateful to all those people who have contributed to the financing of Women Alive.

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of 'Marxism Today' magazine, which is sponsoring this event. Their role in creating a climate on the Left for genuinely popular, accessible and honest debate through events like 'Left Alive' has provided an important model for us to draw from.

Finally, we have been excited by the response from so many women. We feel there is a new desire to tackle our inequalities and divisions that can strengthen the women's movement in Britain today. We hope that Women Alive will contribute to this.

WOMEN ALIVE CO-ORDINATING GROUP

PLUS . . . ALL WEEKEND . . . BANNERMAKING, WOMEN's SELF-HELP HEALTH BUS, 'PICTURES OF HEALTH' EXHIBITION, STALLS . . .

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WOMEN live

PRACTICAL SESSIONS

BODY CONDITIONING/KEEP FIT
Exercise your way to fitness, improve your stamina and mobility – all to music!
Saturday lunchtime 12.30-2.00
Run by Marian Peer
NB: Upper limit of 30; first come first served

SELF DEFENCE
For women who want to reclaim the night – learn how to protect yourself at this taster session
Sunday lunchtime 12.30-2.00
Run by Sue Bradley
NB: Upper limit of 30; first come first served

BANNER-MAKING
Practical art/craft/creative session, continues throughout the weekend to make a banner/wallhanging around feminist images of socialism. *Drop in any time and add your bit!*
Run by Lynette Willoughby
NB: If you'd like to make something beforehand and bring it along, please write to Lynette, at 10 Quarrymount Terrace, Leeds, LS6 2JG

POETRY-READINGS
Informal readings on Sunday lunchtime 12.30-2.00 with Jackie Kay, Barbara Burford, Gabriela Pears (three poets from 'A Dangerous Knowing').

THEATRE WORKSHOP
Details to be announced . . .

WOMEN'S SELF-HELP HEALTH BUS
The bus will be on site during the weekend for women to visit, look round and use

VISITING AUTHORS
Women writers will be holding lunchtime chats during the weekend. More details later . . .

PICTURES OF HEALTH
The Exhibition 'Pictures of Health' is a chronicle of Jo Spence's own remarkable battle against cancer using photographic therapy. *It will be on display throughout the weekend*

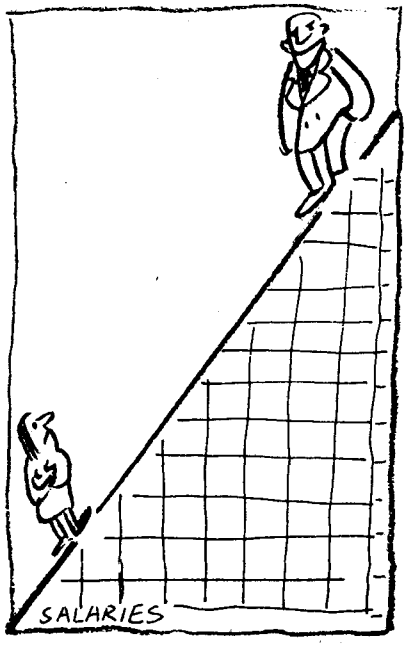
PRACTICAL DESIGN WORKSHOP
Learn the rudiments of making and reading plans, and designing a workspace with women's needs in mind. A first step towards building a women's world. *Organised by Matrix Feminist Design Co-op, the workshop will be run all day Sunday. Full details under main sessions list*
NB: Space may be limited in the workshop and women are invited to register an interest in advance of Women Alive by ringing 01-251 4406.

RIGHTS ADVICE
Starts where the problem pages and agony aunts leave off . . . individual practical advice sessions on housing, social security, *employment, training, careers, equal opportunities,* divorce, custody, sexual harassment, infertility and other subjects will run throughout Sunday morning. These confidential consultations will be held with women who have specialist knowledge in the different areas. *You will be able to fix up a time to chat confidentially with them when you come to Women Alive on the Saturday*
NB: Please book in a time at Women Alive

FILMSHOWS
Cinema of Women and *Circles*, two feminist film and video distributors, will be showing a selection of short films throughout the weekend, grouped around four main themes. Each theme will have a wide range of videos, all made by women, from documentaries designed to provoke discussion, to animated satire; from 1940 to present day.
Films:
Women and History (Saturday morning)
Women at Work (Saturday afternoon)
Women, health and sexuality (Sunday morning)
Women in protest (Sunday afternoon)

WOMEN AND HEALTH: ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Discover things about your own past and how it links up with other women. Learn how to use the powerful personal political messages of oral history in present-day campaigns on crucial issues. *The project is being run on Sunday morning by members of NUPE Northern Ireland Women's Committee.*
Full details under main sessions list

SATURDAY 10.30-12.30



ON THE BOTTOM LINE

Women have always been on the bottom line of earnings and jobs. But only very recently has low pay become a priority area for action by trade unions. Besides examining some of the causes of low pay, this session will ask what pay strategies might best suit women's needs, and how can we make sure they are put into practice in labour movement campaigns against low pay? To help, the session will split into four groups, highlighting the low pay problem in relation to equal pay, trade unions, local authorities as employers, and poverty.

WOMEN ALIVE AND KICKING!

Women Alive will present an all-women entertainment on Saturday evening. This will be at the CAMDEN CENTRE, Bidborough Street, Kings Cross. It kicks off at 7.30pm, with live music, bar and hot food. Tickets can be bought in advance, see registration form for prices.

Speakers

Carrie Oppenheim
(Child Poverty Action Group)
Margaret Prosser
(Transport & General Workers Union)
Nazreen Rahman
(Low Pay Unit)
NUPE Activist

All speakers appear in a personal capacity.

Chaired by
Mary Harrison *(Scottish TUC)*

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COMMUNIST PARTY

What's in it for Women?

communist women give their own reasons for joining.

KATE SULLIVAN (London)
Working parent

The CP's programme, the British Road to Socialism, recognises that feminist ideas are central if we want to transform peoples' lives. We still have to win this understanding among some comrades who regard feminism as a peripheral issue. But which other party even has it on the agenda? For socialist feminists the CP really is the only choice — warts and all.

JANIE GLEN (Hull)
Trade Union activist and member of the party's Executive Committee

I come from a communist family, so I joined the Young Communist League when I was 15 and the party when I was 19, although I didn't stay long in either. Both experiences taught me to think of politics as boring and intimidating. I came back to politics through the women's liberation movement. Feminism changed me, and although you ain't seen nothing yet, it's changing the CP. That's the reason why I'm here, to stay this time.

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NICARAGUA
Programme of 16 day study tours operated jointly with the NSC and New Socialist travelling throughout the country, with full programme of visits, meetings and discussions £798. Also specialist trade union, health, building and cultural workers tours, and a four week combined study tour and work project in summer vacation £950.

CUBA
16 day study tours to Havana (7 days) followed by beach stay at Playas del Este close to Havana with optional tours throughout the island from £670 – also specialist tours for theatre workers (October) and the Havana Film Festival (December).

RUSSIAN LANGUAGE COURSES
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BOOKS

THE CUTTING EDGE:
Women and the Pit Strike
Vicky Seddon (ed.)

A moving collection of contributions by many of the women most centrally involved in the strike. Drawing on experiences from English, Scottish and Welsh coalfields, it examines the roles played by women in the strike and their relevance to contemporary feminism. Contributors include *Kath Mackay*, *Jean Miller* and *Beatrix Campbell*.

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SHEFFIELD FILM CO-OP

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Bringing up children on low incomes under the Thatcher government.

FOR A LIVING WAGE *VHS 15 mins - out June 1986.*
A campaign video around the issue of low pay.

These and other films and videos on women's and labour issues available for hire or sale from: Sheffield Film Co-op, Albreda House, Lydgate Lane, Sheffield S10 5FH. Tel: (0742) 668857.

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WOMEN live

STRUGGLES OF OUR OWN
(WOMEN IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES)

Die-hard socialists preach that socialism is a necessary precondition of women's liberation. But many feminists would doubt whether the socialist countries have achieved this in reality, and don't see why women should have to wait any longer!

A group of women with interests in very different socialist countries will shed some light on how those societies are developing, the impact of change on women, and what forms and expressions of women's politics are alive . . .

Speakers

Marian Sling
Gania Browning
(Writer on Women in the USSR)
Elizabeth Kroll
(Writer on Women in China)
Barbara Einhorn
(European Nuclear Disarmament Campaign)

DISABILITY AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Recent advances in medical technology have enormously improved the life chances of foetuses. This directly raises huge questions about the right to life of the disabled – a dilemma which has been skilfully manipulated by anti-abortionists with their horror stories of aborted handicapped foetuses left to die . . .

Important advances in women's struggles for control of their own reproduction have been won – for many. But women with disabilities still face open discrimination and denial of their rights to bear and bring up children. This session will face some of these difficult questions about feminism and reproduction, in discussions between women who are active in the feminist disabled movement, and women involved in reproductive rights campaigns.

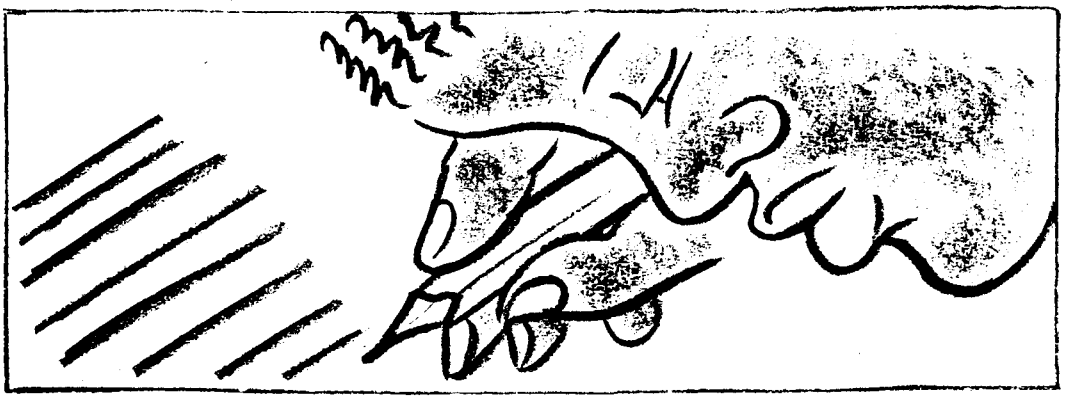
Speakers include

Jane Woddis
(activist in reproductive rights campaigns)
Michelene Mason
(Member of the Liberation Network of People with Disabilities)

MAKING WAVES: BLACK WOMEN WRITERS

Recent years have seen an upsurge in Black women's writings being published in Britain. Many writers, such as Alice Walker and Maya Angelou, have been 'imported' from the USA and have given us a wealth of inspiring and literary energy. But has this new fashion for Black women's writings been at the expense of British Black women writers? There are many British Black women writers, yet very few are published. Why is this? We will discuss what Black women are writing and how they are challenging, creating and documenting their struggle through fiction and non-fiction.

This session is organised by Sheba Publishers, and will be chaired by one of the Sheba collective.



LOCKING US AWAY

Who are the women in prison, and why are they there? What's prison like for the women inside? This session will look at Home Office-imposed secrecy and some of the issues this secrecy tries to blank out; in particular, the treatment of mentally and physically ill women, and death in prison. We will ask what can be done by women outside to open up prison and change it?

Speakers

Chris Tchaikovsky
(Women in Prison Campaign)
Melissa Benn
(Author: Death in the City and Women in Prison Campaign)

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WOMEN live

HERE TO STAY

The government's immigration policy is sexist: even the European courts have agreed that. But the rules, procedures and practices are also deeply racist. Black women, especially from Pakistan and India are made to endure humiliating interrogation about their lives; are forcibly separated from their families, and risk being thrown out of Britain if their marriage ends. Black women are organising resistance now. Anti-deportation campaigns, in which Black women are to the fore, are becoming a growing political reality throughout Britain.

Women involved in anti-deportation campaigning and with personal experience of facing deportations will introduce this workshop.

WOMEN'S ART, WOMEN'S CRAFTS?

Are you too a closet knit? One of the growing band who never go to anything political unless armed with your carrier bag stuffed with knitting needles, patterns and balls of wool? Traditional women's crafts – needlework, embroidery, crochet as well as knitting – are back in fashion, but also among feminists. Proof of feminism's middle-class orientation? Or is something rather subversive going on in reclaiming traditional 'feminine' skills as a new expression of women's liberation and resistance? Untangle some of the ambiguities with us in this session!

Chaired by

Rosemary Betterton *(feminist art historian and writer)*

8 WOMEN IN EUROPE

Is the European Community working for women? It has certainly proved useful in counteracting some of Thatcherism's worst effects on women, through, for example, favourable judgements in the European Court on pay comparability and retirement rights. Women are also more prominent and numerous in the European Parliament itself. But beyond these limited improvements how should feminists judge Europe's impact on our lives?

Is it worthwhile devoting energies to building up contacts and networks among European women to make a mark on the EEC?

Catheryn Hoskins will lead an assessment of the balance-sheet of benefits, possibilities and limitations of a European Community for women.

Speakers include

Catheryn Hoskins *(writer on women and Europe)*
Carole Tongue *(Euro MP)*

OLD HABITS DIE HARD

'Realignment' is a buzzword much in use on the leftwing of politics right now. But what do these shifting attitudes and policies mean for women? We'll be looking critically at how much feminism has influenced recent leftwing ideas; if realignment really holds any political promise for women, and how to make an impact on the shake-up of the Left.

Speakers include

Glenys Thornton *(Labour Party)*
Jackie Hayward *(Communist Party)*

SATURDAY 2.00-4.00

A WORLD TO WIN

Feminists have been described as the modern Utopians, projecting the possibilities for future societies through our lifestyles, work and culture. But is our ability to dream being dulled by the overwhelming realities of economic insecurity, unemployment and hardship? What are our starting points for a better world: some kind of super-advanced capitalism? A less abrasive, less austere socialism? Or perhaps somewhere altogether different over the rainbow . . .?

This session will bring together women with a wide range of political and social backgrounds, some well-known, others not, to reveal and share together our aspirations and fantasies for the future.

Speakers

Barbara Burford *(writer)*
Sarah Lefanu *(author)*
Teresa Gorman *(Conservative Councillor)*
Janice Owens *(Green Party)*
Dorothy Grey *(longtime member, Communist Party)*

Chair

Janie Glen *(feminist in search of Utopia)*

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WOMEN, RESISTANCE AND REVOLUTION

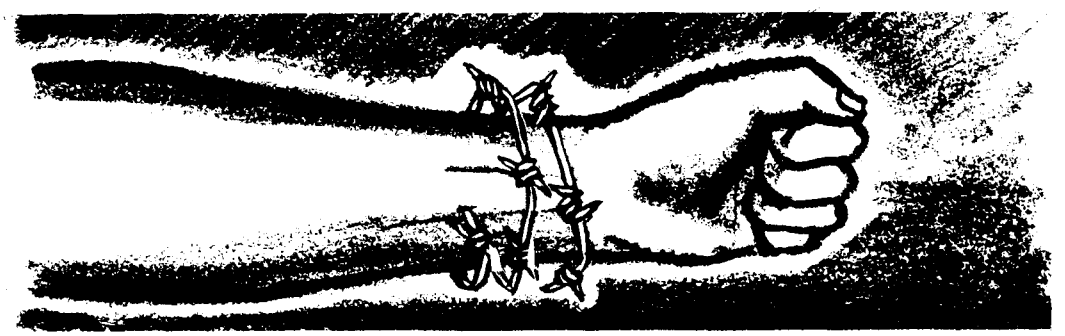
Women in Chile have made clear that their resistance to General Pinochet is not an end in itself. They are, they say, carving out a political space for women for the future, long after the dictatorship.

Throughout Central and Latin America women are involved in an enormous variety of organisation, from providing basic necessities to taking up armed struggle. Most importantly, they have found their own forms of protest and defiant resistance both to dictatorships and to men's ways of organising.

With the use of a BBC film 'The Chile Connection' we will discuss women's part to date in these resistance movements, and also how much has changed for women in Nicaragua and Cuba.

Speakers *from Central and Latin America, and from solidarity movements in Britain*

Women Alive is also women doing, learning, teaching, experimenting, discovering and having fun!
Over the weekend there are numerous activities and practical workshops to join in on, as well as films to see, exhibitions, stalls, talks and discussions outside the actual sessions.



WHY DO WOMEN WRITE?

This session has a panel of women writers who are both established and recently-published authors. They will be talking about how they started to write and what keeps them going. Also – who do they write for? How does their writing relate, or not, to other parts of their lives? What experiences do they draw on? Do they see themselves as part of a tradition of women's writing?

Chaired by Ros Brunt

HEALTH MATTERS

The National Health Service has seen better days. But even when it was healthier it failed women in many respects. Now, beset by cutbacks, it remains undemocratic, unresponsive and ruled by professional men who insist that they know what's best for women.

In contrast it is the Women's Movement which has given women increasing understanding, interest and control over their bodies, their health and their illnesses. From this, numerous alternative therapies have developed, as yet regarded dismissively by the official health service.

Can we – do we want to – feminise the NHS, and if so, how?

Speakers

Dr Katy Gardner
Pat Thornley *(Women's Health Info & Support Centre)*
Dr Usha Rae *(Obstetrician)*
Sue Washington *(Director, Liverpool Holistic Health Centre)*

BLACK & WHITE WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER

Black women's perspectives on many important issues ranging from the family and the health service, to peace and international relations, have been very different from those of white women. Through their experience of white racism, Black women have provided a radical challenge to the traditional assumptions of the women's movement. Why has the women's movement failed to respond to this challenge? Is it possible to build solidarity between Black and white women?

Through discussion of such issues as working structures, positive discrimination, personal and institutional racism, class and imperialism, this session will explore ways in which we can co-operate.

This session is sponsored by Spare Rib and will be chaired and introduced by speakers from the Spare Rib collective.

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WOMEN live

POVERTY-TRAPPED WOMEN

Do you hide your poverty, saying: you don't like going out, you hate having people round, you've gone right off food, who needs new clothes when the jumble sales are so good, the kids like wearing wellies in the summer?

Have you ever had to: go to work at 5am so the neighbours won't see; told the children not to talk about the family to outsiders; said "he's not my lover, he's my brother"? What can women DO? Come and discuss with a panel, some of whom have lived out some of the questions and are still searching for the answers . . .

Chaired by

Mary Gardiner *(Campaigner for children's rights)*

GETTING IN A LATHER

Love 'em or loathe 'em, millions tune in for their weekly diet of soap – from the money-drenched world of Dallas and Dynasty to the more realistic Brookside, Eastenders and Coronation Street. Just what makes them so popular? Entertaining, moving and gripping they certainly are but what do they say about our society and women's position in it? Using video excerpts, we'll dissect these shows and the way they're portrayed in the tabloid press and magazines.

Speakers include

Christine Gerraty

IS THERE A FEMINIST MORALITY?

The family, sexuality, reproduction: these are all issues which have hit the headlines in recent times. The underlying theme linking controversy in all these areas has been 'morality', and it is the Right who've been setting the tone of that morality. On some key questions, such as law and order, feminists' desire for action has resulted in an uneasy convergence of demands with the moral right. We've never really considered if an alternative 'feminist morality' is necessary, desirable or even possible. Can we now begin to piece together our own views on morals and society?

Speakers

Lucy Bland *(Writer and lecturer in sexual politics)*
Chris Tchaikovsky *(Women in Prison Campaign & author)*
Melissa Benn *(Journalist)*

Chair

Jane Woddis *(Communist Party)*

HEROINES

There are few heroines in our society. In some of the most enduring – Marilyn Monroe, Judy Garland, Janis Joplin – we discover behind the cultivated gloss of the image-makers, impressarios and ad-men, women who were lonely, unhappy, even desperate victims. But times and images are changing: today's 'heroines' from Tessa Sanderson to Annie Lennox or Madonna, project more complex and often less 'feminine' attributes, resisting attempts to be packaged as stereotypes.

What models and which heroines do we fashion for ourselves and our daughters? In this session women who've had to create their own images talk about heroines.

Speakers include

Kathy Myers *(journalist)*
Jane Graves

Chair

Julie Lawrence *(Sussex District Committee of the Communist Party)*

SATURDAY 4.30-6.30

THE GENDER OF SCIENCE

If as the nursery rhyme claims, little boys are made of rats and snails, is it so surprising that they grow up into mad scientists who want to portray women as genetically inferior? This session will try and shed light on how far scientific theory is a male construct which is used to justify as well as explain the way the world works. We want to try to put together a feminist approach to science, using the example of the 'nature versus nurture' debate and biological determinism; and other examples from technology and the physical sciences.

Lynda Birke *(Feminist & biologist at the Open University, Author: 'Women, Feminism & Biology')* will be talking to Lynette Willoughby *(Lecturer in electronics)* and Gale Vines *(Biological sciences editor, New Scientist)*

Chair Mary Attenborough *(Computer programmer)*

. . . AND MORE . . . AND MORE . . . AND MORE . . . AND MORE . . .
There will be various stalls an stands in addition to those mentioned over the weekend. If you would like to run a stall, provide a display o organise some other activity please let us know. Ring Women Alive on 01-251 4406

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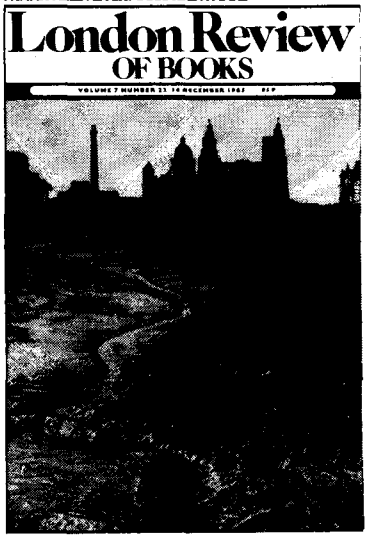

'The *London Review of Books* is the house magazine of the British intellectual élite . . . good minds are at their best when writing like this, on their mettle rather than up on stilts . . . When a paper is as good as this one, it hurts to throw old copies away.' – Clive James.

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Founded October 1979. Entirely independent. Estimated current readership 55,000. Read in 75 countries around the world. Printed on newsprint in large tabloid format. 22 issues a year. At least 15 major articles in every issue. Poems. Short stories. In 1985, reviewed 1,000 important British and American books. Publishes only original material.

A Literary Journal?

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A Political Journal

The *New Statesman* has praised the "clear and central lines of debate of the sort recently maintained by the *London Review of Books* over the miners' strike and the sinking of the Belgrano". Other recent political analysis in the LRB includes **J.K. Galbraith** on Truman, **Peter Shore** on Gaitskell, **Peter Jenkins** on Socialism without Socialism, **R.W. Johnson** on the French elections, **Anatole Kaletsky** on the international debt crisis, **Robert Cecil** on Soviet intelligence, **Neal Ascherson** on the rise and fall of the political press in Britain, **Joel Shurkin** on Atomic tests.

The *London Review of Books* is not a light journal. Some would say it was positively formidable. Certainly, it assumes people want substance for their money. We are sure that readers of *Women Alive* will enjoy and value the LRB. That's why we are offering you the chance to take out a subscription with a free trial period of 3 months (six issues). We think you'll become addicted. If you don't, we'll give you your money back in full at any time in the trial period.

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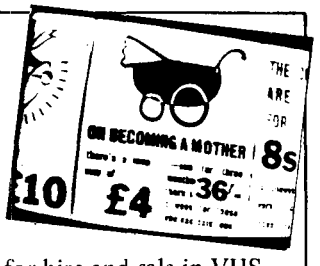

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FIRES
arts/culture/politics

The first ever issue of *FIRES* will be out in May and will feature: Ben Zephaniah, GLC abolition and the Arts, literary life in Belfast, British poetry since the war, Norman Mailer, Ken Kiff, comics, punk, Nicaraguan folksinger Carlos Mejia Godoy and dancer Ronald Abud Vivas and more. . .

BURNING ISSUES!

PLUS, News reviews and comment. From film, food and fashion through to punk, politics and painting - *FIRES* will be opening up debates; reporting on issues and people; and giving information.

COMING UP!

IN the next few issues we'll be looking at women photographers, Norman Buchan MP on Labour's Arts policy, Arts in the Third World, mural painting, artists and CND, videos and still more. . .

LOOK OUT FOR FIRES!

***FIRES* will be available in bookshops from May but if you have any trouble getting hold of a copy just send us a cheque or postal order for £2.00 (made payable to 'Fires Publishing') and we'll rush you a copy of our first trailblazing issue!**

FIRES

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WOMEN Alive

HOW AID MAKES WOMEN POOR

What effects have 'aid' and 'development' had on women in the Third World? Colonialism certainly damaged women's position in many Third World societies, but many aid and development programmes have not only ignored women's role and status, they have seriously worsened them. Various independent aid agencies have started schemes aimed specifically at women now, but are these working? Or is more radical action needed to improve women's position in the Third World?

Speakers include

Suki Field *(Women's Officer, VSO)*

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

Speakers
Josephine Zara
Sheila Tabard *(Haringey Women's Unit)*
Geraldine Tabard

Discussion facilitator
Zelda Curtis

"The guards at the cell door" is how writer Andrea Dworkin describes mothers. They "raise daughters" she says, "to conform to the strictures of the conventional female life as defined by men . . ." Strengths, tensions, exasperations and warmth; the struggle for individual identity and the need for closeness: these are all facets of a mother-daughter relationship. Even more complex is the relationship of a lesbian mother to her heterosexual daughter, or a young British-born Asian woman who challenges her mother's cultural inheritance. The potential of this workshop discussion will extend as far as you want to in exploring your own relationship and experiences.

DO WOMEN RIOT?

'Riot' conjures up many images and meanings: anarchy, uprising, struggle, protest, resistance . . . As a form of mass political action, 'riot' has a long and honourable history. But in what possible conditions or circumstances might such action be justifiable today? What factors distinguish national liberation movement actions in S. Africa from Brixton or Broadwater Farm? Above all, can there be a *feminist* justification of violent, aggressive, warring behaviour? Or must we redefine the vocabulary and the content of 'riot' if it is to be of use to us?

Speakers
Sally Alexander *(Historian)*
Eleanor Khanyile *(A N C) Women from Broadwater Farm Defence Committee and Greenham Common*

Chair
Jean Miller *(Barnsley Women against Pit Closures)*

13

WOMEN'S PAGES

Do commercial women's magazines contribute towards a feminist future? Both 'career-woman' glossies and 'home-based' magazines have done some excellent reporting and launched campaigns on important issues such as women's tax, equal pay, health care and nurseries. But how can this be reconciled with the fashion pages and beauty tips? Do women's pages, TV or radio programmes offer any better perspective when presenting a women's angle? Is the fight for a 'women's voice' in the media in danger of creating a ghetto?

Speakers

Sharon Maxwell *(Cosmopolitan)* Jean Shapiro *(Good Housekeeping magazine)*

This session is organised and chaired by Everywoman magazine

IN THE FAMILY WAY

If violence against women says something about relations between women and men in general, what meaning does violence against children express and what should feminism or the Left be doing about it? What is happening to the condition of parenthood: why are parents being driven to kill their children, and what can be done to stop it?

An uncomfortable workshop in which there will be opportunities to listen to each others' experiences as children, parents and allies of both. Young people especially welcome.

Speakers include Frankie Rickford and a woman from the Children's Legal Centre

THE TOUGH COP

Media images of policing have traditionally been overwhelmingly of macho men. But what have we here . . .? Cagney and Lacey, Juliet Bravo, The Gentle Touch: these new media policeladies seem far removed from the Sweeney and Starsky and Hutch. Are they trying to present a 'feminised' view of the police force, and why? How do these images relate to women's actual experience of policing, and policewomen?

These issues will be debated by women who have experience of both the fantasy and real cop worlds.

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WOMEN IN SOCIETY
A Feminist List edited by Jo Campling

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Jenny Beale
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Leonore Davidoff and Belinda Westover (eds)
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Rosemary Ridd and Helen Callaway (eds)
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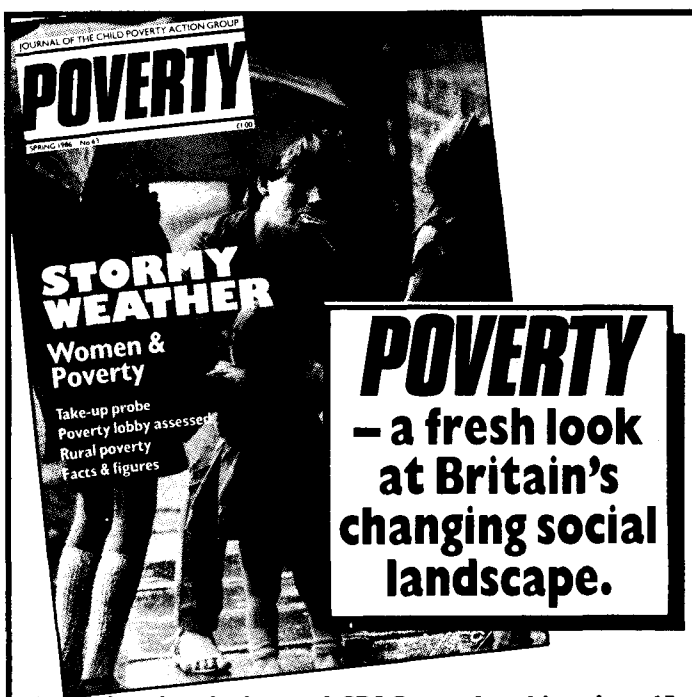

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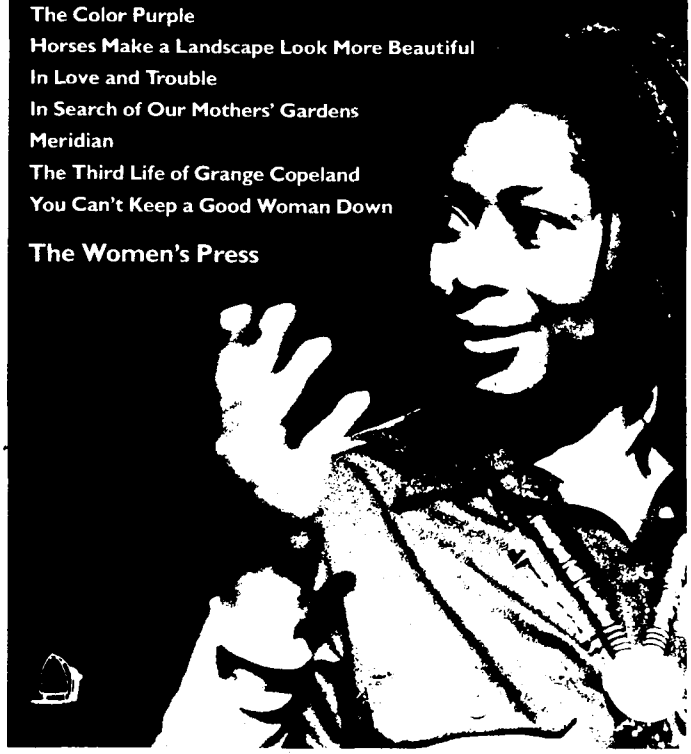

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WOMEN live

SUNDAY 10.30-12.30

IMAGES OF AFRICA?

Black women's own stories: strength, struggle against slavery and oppression, celebration of cultures and histories ... challenge the images of Live Aid and the Sunday supplements. Presenting positive images is a part of fighting the racism and imperialism facing Afro-Caribbean and African women.

Can Black and white women together change the patronising and demeaning stereotypes, or have white women also a vested interest in keeping things the way they are?

Speakers
from Akina Mama wa Afrika

A CROSS-PARTY POLITICAL AGENDA FOR WOMEN

How has feminism affected the policies and practices of political parties across the traditional left-right divide? Is there room for a common feminist manifesto – even a party – or is feminism itself too diverse to allow this? Women who are active in existing political parties will look together at the problems and possibilities of a common political agenda uniting us across and beyond party lines.

Chair Sarah Benton *(Deputy Editor, New Statesman)*

Speakers include
Emma Nicholson *(Conservative Party)*
Sue Slipman *(SDP/Liberal Alliance)*
Tricia Davis *(Communist Party)*

FROM GIRLFRIENDS TO BOYFRIENDS?

As young women we are encouraged to attract a man, only to be blamed if we then go 'too far'. Becoming a 'normal' adult woman means concentrating on boyfriends, and girls' friendships are seen as time spent gossiping, giggling and being silly. In reality, most young women's lives don't match the magazines; or the 'alternative' of Victoria Gillick – part of a caring, loving and protective family. So who should decide things like at what age girls can use contraception, and why don't the same standards apply for boys? How do young women make their own rules about sexuality? In this session we'll talk about how we can create a culture which allows us as women to make real choices about our sexuality, whether we are lesbians, heterosexual or celibate.

Speakers
Anoushka McKechnie *(Young Communist League, anti-Gillick Campaign)*
Charlotte Ashton *(The Rubber Jennies)*
Jacqui Halson *(Researcher on young women and sexuality)*
Mary Williams *(Avon sexual abuse centre)*

Chair
Norma Daykin *(student)*

A FEMINIST ECONOMICS?

Economics is another of those peculiarly male-dominated areas of decision-making: unsurprisingly, given the importance of its outcomes.

Jobs, training, childcare, hours of work: these all concern economic strategy, and also affect women's lives intimately. Demanding greater priority for our needs means facing up to how far our demands are really attainable, and within what timescale? Would new economic priorities also benefit men, or should we expect conflict and resistance, even from 'progressive' quarters where men still control the policies?

Speakers

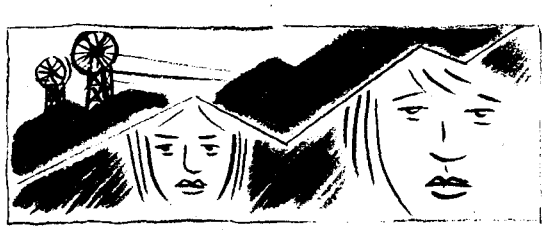
Jean Gardiner *(Adult Education tutor)*
Anne Phillips *(Lecturer in Politics, City of London Polytechnic)*

THE CUTTING EDGE: MINING WOMEN THEN AND NOW

Chaired by
Vicky Seddon *(editor of "The Cutting Edge")*

Women from the coalfields and others who supported the miners' strike have together produced a book, "The Cutting Edge: Women and the Miners' Strike", in which they write about how the strike affected their lives and their thinking. Some of these women will talk about the strike, whether the dramatic involvement of women in it has had any lasting effects on their lives, and what is happening now in the women's organisation.

Many of the women involved have not met each other before, and will only recently have read what the other contributors have written. This will be an opportunity for them to comment on the experiences of their fellow authors.



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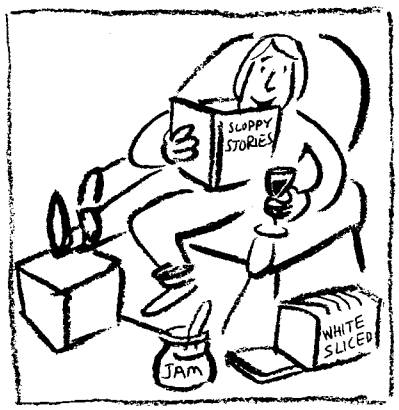
WOMEN live

GUILTY PLEASURES



When you're enjoying yourself do you ever have a nagging feeling that what you're doing may not be ideologically sound? Do you think that maybe penetration is not the last bastion of male power, or that dungarees are uniform? Do you sometimes wonder who or what took the enjoyment out of liberation? Talking about guilty pleasures at this session will be

Susie Orbach *(psychotherapist) – on Original Sins*
Michelle Roberts *(author) – on Social Straightjackets*
Rose Shapiro *(author) – on the Feminist Imperative*

The session, chaired by Celia Weston, will break into smaller discussion groups, depending on numbers attending, after the introductions.

WOMEN & HEALTH: AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral history is a way of searching out women's own personal histories, using our memories, folk-memory and other women's recollections of their past. It is fascinating to take part in: you may see yourself very differently by the end! It can also be a very clear example of the personal being political, drawing on your past to inform your understanding of the present. We have used oral history as a powerful propaganda tool in campaigns against the privatisation of health. Join us in painting in the canvas of our common experiences.

The session will be conducted by members of NUPE's Northern Ireland Women's Committee

TO BE, NOT TO BE AND HOW TO BE

16

Remaining true to one's feminist principles in a man's world is almost impossible, so we nearly all accept compromises in daily life which we'd rather not ideally make.

How much more difficult if we're also responsible, as parents, for guiding, teaching and helping to raise children.

The material and physical problems of coping as a single mother are matched by the daily dilemmas of how to present the world to the child and the child to the world.

Speakers include
Sheila Rowbotham *(feminist writer)*

Chair
Moira O'Toole

SEE PAGE 21

WOMEN AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (I)

SUNDAY 2.00-4.00

MOVING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

Women are demanding to be seen and listened to everywhere. More women are now working their way up the hierarchies of political parties, trade unions and other organisations in public life. But why?

Can we really join in these essentially male battlegrounds, or is the price simply too high in compromises made by the women who do get embroiled in institutional politics?

What do women working in mainstream organisations have to offer to the rest of us who have maybe deliberately avoided – or been excluded from – 'men's politics'? And the biggest question of all must be how to connect with those women who have no contact, or interest, in such 'political' forums. If we are to 'live' feminism we must answer that question in our personal practice and our organisations. A round-table discussion of women in the mainstream will ponder it all.

The Round-table: Diane Abbott *(Black feminist, Labour Party Parliamentary candidate)*
Clare Short *(Labour MP)* Inez McCormack *(Feminist and Trade Union Organiser)*
Tricia Davis *(Executive Committee, Communist Party)*

Chair Bea Campbell *(Journalist)*

CAKE, NOT CRUMBS

It is important to recognise how racism and sexism are manifested in art theory and art institutions. The Arts Council says that approx 10% of its funds are allocated to Black people . . . In reality do we see this occurring? Western ethnocentricity believes in inequality: in the visual arts through their separation into cultural, historical and geographical niches . . The ideas of the ethnic and exotic divide so-called 'mainstream' or Western art from so-called 'marginal' or Black art. What is the position of Black artists in this struggle for funds, facilities and just recognition?

Speakers include
Jackie Akuba Layne *(Artist)*

Chair
Sandra Dunkley

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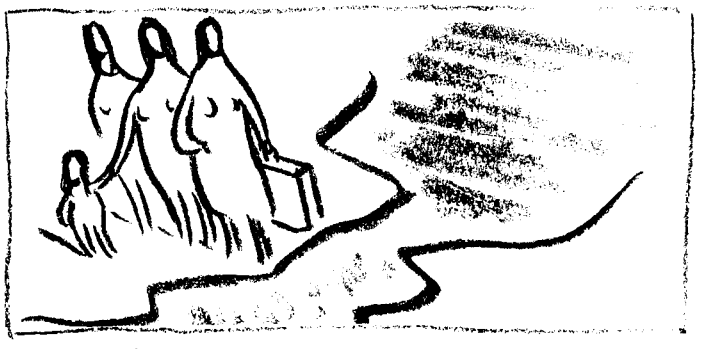
CURRENT ISSUES IN SOCIALIST-FEMINISM

This session will be based around some of the main issues taken up in the new *Feminist Review* (No 23, Summer 1986, out in June).

It is a special issue entitled *Socialist-Feminism: Out of the Blue*, dealing with a wide range of issues: class politics, racism, lesbian sexuality, the miners' strike, Armagh jail, the Labour Party, and Greenham among others.

Participants include – among various contributors to the Special issue who will be at the session – Jean McCrindle *(treasurer of Women Against Pit Closures) and women from the mining communities* Anne Phillips *(author)*

Lynne Segal, chairing the session



IRISH WOMEN IN BRITAIN

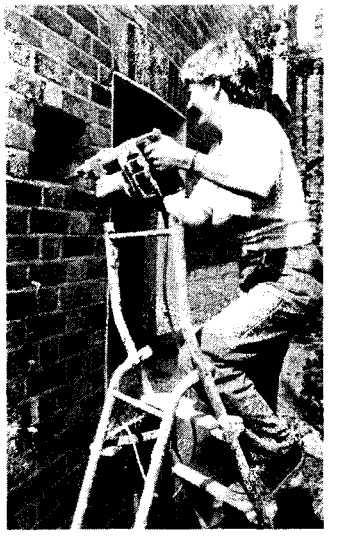
Grainne Mhaol is a collective of three women researching a book on Irish women's emigration to Britain. In this session they will talk about the history of Irish women's emigration and share some of the findings of their research, including stories told by some of the women they have spoken to. They will also be showing slides of Irish community life in Britain including pictures of travel and arrival.

Members of the Grainne Mhaol Collective introducing the session are Mary Lennon, Marie McAdam, Joanna O'Brien.

FEMINISM ON THE RATES

The growth of women's committees and equal opportunity units in town halls all over the country has enabled the development and implementation of local strategies for women. For the first time there has been the power and the resources to do something. But have they really empowered any more than a small section of already fairly privileged women? How have they related in particular to the needs of Black women, lesbians and working-class women?

With relatively limited budgets how are decisions made about priorities for funding and how can we have democratic control over that decision-making process? This session will give a chance for reflection on the experience of municipal feminism from around the country; its strengths and weaknesses.



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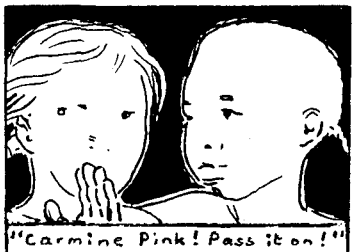
Speakers

Monica Johnson *(Camden Council Women's Unit)*
Sue Lieberman *(Edinburgh District Council Women's Unit) in a personal capacity*
Jane Hutt *(South Glamorgan Council, Organiser Welsh Women's Aid)*
Pragna Patel *(Southall Black Women's Centre)*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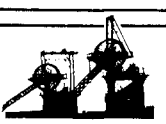

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WOMEN live

NEW PROBLEMS, NEW THEORY

Black women, Greenham women, 'miners' wives': women taking political initiatives while the Left barely holds its ground. What can these movements teach the Left and each other about political strategies and organisation?

Feminism and socialism have taken on new meaning in the 1980's, but have we got a theory to fit? By focussing on the experiences of Black women, and the Women Against Pit Closures movement, this session hopes to explore a new architecture of radical democratic politics.

Speakers

Vicky Seddon
Kumkum Bhavnani
Chantel Mouffe

Chair
Mandy Robinson

WHAT MAKES US TICK?

To borrow from a famous saying: a feminist needs a political party like a fish needs a bicycle! The Communist Party claims to have a programme and policies committed to a thoroughly feminist perspective. This session will aim to put the party, its programme and practice 'on trial', and will explore the attitudes, motivations, beliefs and views of feminists in the Communist Party.

Ann Pettifor, *Trade Union Liaison Officer for the Labour Party's Women's Action Committee,* will put the questions.

A group of women with very varied backgrounds and experiences, in the Communist Party, will reply.

WOMEN AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (II)

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21

This workshop is organised by the MATRIX FEMINIST DESIGN CO-OPERATIVE, who will run it.

NB i) There are two sessions involved 10.30-1pm and 2-4pm Sunday. Each will deal with aspects of the same problem, and are linked, so women are encouraged to come to both.

ii) Because of space there may be a limit to numbers on this session. If you would like to come, please try and let Women Alive know in advance (01-251 4406).

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Mel Chevannes *(Labour Councillor, Wolverhampton)*

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WOMEN live

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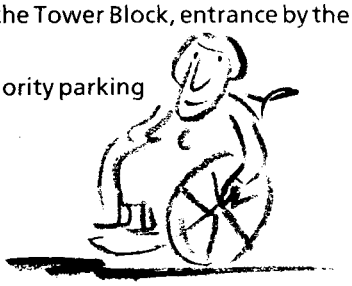
Access Code information: please ring 01-251 4406 (Women Alive) day. 01-318 6266 evening.

Overspill: In the event of overspill it may be necessary to use accommodation in the Main Building where access will have to be assisted.

Creche: the creche is in the Main Building (assisted access only).

Registration: Registration for women with disabilities will be in the ground floor foyer of the Tower Block, entrance by the car park.

Car parking: there will be priority parking for women with disabilities.



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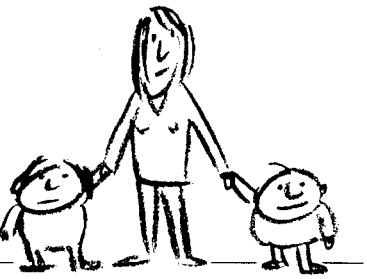

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NB: The immediate vicinity of South Bank Polytechnic is not very well served by good cheap eating places.

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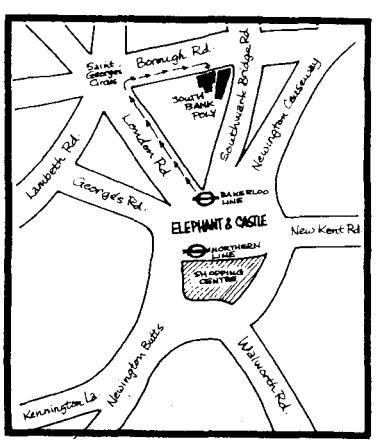

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PARTY MUSIC

Alliances between pop and politics are not new. The formation of Red Wedge, however, is distinctive in its close identification with the Labour party.

Simon Frith and John Street

THERE IS a long-established argument that pop and organised politics have little in common, and that each suffers by being linked. The most notorious moment of the Woodstock Festival, ultimate celebration of 1960s counter-culture, was when Pete Townshend of The Who knocked Abbey Hoffman off stage as he tried to make a political speech, and even now, after Live Aid has revealed the practical possibilities of an organised rock campaign, media cynics like Julie Burchill suggest that 'there's no safer way to castrate (sic) a political view than to express it to a throbbing back-beat'.

But such scepticism is matched by the increasingly dogged claims of those who insist on uniting pop and politics, who hear in that same back-beat the sound of a democratic populism.

Are they right? The best way to answer the question is to examine Red Wedge, the organisation of entertainers for the Labour party. In both its claims and its activities Red Wedge focuses the issues. Is pop just a distraction from the real struggle? Can politicians learn anything from rock stars?

Roots and branches

Red Wedge certainly seems to symbolise a new attitude among pop musicians to political parties. In 1974, the Musicians Union tried to recruit rock stars to Labour's electoral cause. They got two replies: Alan Price said he would help; Ray Davies of the Kinks (and now Red Wedge) said he was voting Tory. The attempt to recruit musicians through their union failed. In comparison, Red Wedge (launched at the end of last year) is a remarkable success. This time the musicians (who cover the pop world from Sade to The Smiths) were persuaded to join by the party, not the union, and the impresario was not a union official but a rock star, Billy Bragg. With Red Wedge, the party and musicians have worked together from the start. The party put up the initial money for a tour and provided MPs to talk to the audience in the foyer; Billy Bragg brought together the performers.

Their motives for joining varied. Even now, Red Wedge seems to have no agreed political line except anti-Thatcherism and vaguely expressed support for the Labour party and for the need to involve young people in politics. The Redskins, the SWP's house band and supporters of many left benefits, refused to be involved, on the grounds that Red Wedge was simply geared to the support of a 'right wing' party leadership. Black musician Junior Giscombe ceded that while Labour was the best of the main political groups, 'if you asked me to get up on a stage and recruit for them, I would say no, because I still don't believe in a lot of the things that the Labour party are doing, especially for black kids'. He, like the rest of the Red Wedge touring troupe, seemed to be there to change the party as much as to support it – Paul Weller's stage rhetoric, in particular, had a distinctly militant flavour: 'we're going to take the party back into our hands!'

Involvement with a particular party is Red Wedge's most distinctive feature. There are many precedents for the pop-political alliance, most obviously Rock Against Racism in the late 1970s, which drew on the power and commitment of punk and reggae in its attempt to build a political movement around a concert platform. The point of RAR, though, was not to change a party but to destroy one, the National Front, and while the SWP was instrumental in sustaining it, RAR was not used as a way of mobilising support for the SWP. The successful emphasis was on local initiatives and grassroots organisation (something the highly centralised Red Wedge should note).

with Red Wedge the musicians and the politicians are involved in messy questions of policy and strategy

What really distinguishes Red Wedge from RAR, though, and what makes it such an important development, is the way it brings political judgements into play. Musicians are not simply supporting a single cause, they are involved in linking issues into a political programme. They are part of a process in which alliances are being forged as part of an electoral strategy.

These changes are a result of a number of different musical and political factors. Red Wedge traded on the well-established tradition within popular music for benefit performances and, in particular, many of Red Wedge's stars had given such support during the miners' strike, which had brought them into direct contact with the organised labour movement. Their involvement led to their increasing politicisation, not just in terms of the content of their songs, but also in terms of their actions, their understanding that supporting Labour (or, at least, opposing Thatcher) meant more than cash donations.

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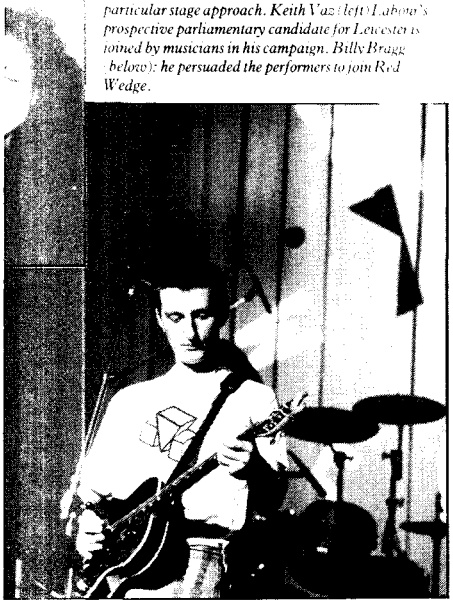
RED WEDGE: their concerts were intended to unite audiences in a common cause. Paul Weller, Jerry Dammers, Sommerville, Sarah-Jane Morris, Billy Bragg and Junior (above) are all well-known musicians with particular stage approach. Keith Vaz (left) Labour's prospective parliamentary candidate for Leicester is joined by musicians in his campaign. Billy Bragg (below): he persuaded the performers to join Red Wedge.



The changes in musicians' attitudes in the last few years are paralleled by wider shifts in cultural politics. 'Youth' has become an increasingly salient political constituency, both as a potential electorate and as the specific victim of government policies, while the 60s generation of activists has now reached an influential place in left organisations. The latter take for granted the political importance of both music and youth; they are attuned to ideas of cultural engagement, at odds with the forms and concerns of traditional political activity. The result of all these developments is that musicians are having to face new sorts of political questions, while politicians wrestle with new sorts of cultural questions, as they work together to write policies on tape levies or pirate radio, or independent labels or community music.

From rebellion to responsibility

There is something touching about the picture of pop stars like Billy Bragg, Paul Weller and Jerry Dammers attending endless committee meetings to discuss the nuts and bolts of Labour party arts policy or Anti-Apartheid's regional campaign. It's a picture in striking contrast to rock's traditional imagery of leather-clad rebellion and drugged bohemia and it is tempting to explain it by reference to the personalities involved – Bragg, Weller and Dammers are unusual stars. But Red Wedge has the active support of performers with no activist history, and it is important to understand the material factors lying behind the emergence of a general feeling of 'responsibility' among musicians. This feeling was displayed most dramatically in the Live Aid concerts but is a continuing presence in both Britain and the USA (where Live Aid was succeeded by Farm Aid and Artists Against Apartheid's 'Sun City').

The source of pop stars' new-found moralism lies, paradoxically, in the record industry's success in absorbing rock's youthful rebellion, in placing pop stars at the centre of a world-wide leisure industry. The technological developments of the last decade – the spread of cassette recording, the increasingly important cross-national presence of satellite broadcasting and cable tv – have made Anglo-American musicians a more significant source of multinational profit than ever before. The idea that rock is some sort of 'underground' entertainment is now clearly ridiculous.

Rock's incorporation into consumerism – from counter-culture and sub-culture to multi-media sales campaign – hasn't, then, diminished its political significance (as suggested by people who denounce musicians for 'selling out') but raised new questions about musicians' responsibilities, and it was Bob Geldof's achievement to ask these questions in the most pertinent possible way, to counterpose pop's global success (Phil Collins's records to be heard in every African capital) to the appalling realities of the world economy.

The paradox of Live Aid was that while in the name of 'humanity' it seemed to depoliticise famine, in the same terms, in the name of 'humanity', it politicised mass music. Red Wedge can be seen as an effect of this new-found sense of responsibility in Britain. It is seen as a way of organising political activity, not just concerts, but workshops for would-be musicians and video-makers, and local groups to co-ordinate cultural activities and youth support for Labour. Whether such plans work (and at present there is little happening at local level to justify the rhetoric) and whether full-time musicians can really be effective political organisers is another matter, but the point is that there is a substantive group of performers who believe they have a responsibility to try.

'the Labour party is the fun party, the good time party, come and enjoy yourselves!'

There's a last point to be made about this. The 'power' of musicians to influence their fans has not just attracted political interest from the Left. While Bob Geldof was mobilising this power to a noble end in Britain, the Parents Music Resource Centre was seeking to curtail it in the USA. The PMRC's moral crusade against rock is reminiscent of responses to rock'n'roll in the 1950s. These culminated in the payola hearings, the 'clean-up' of pop radio. The

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PMRC has used similar tactics to 'clean up' rock lyrics and videos: a congressional sub-committee, a press campaign, a touring slide show of the 'Filthy 15' worst songs. This campaign reflects the new Right realisation that pop is powerful and must therefore be subjected to proper moral scrutiny and regulation.

We can expect similar campaigns in Britain and they suggest a situation in which rock musicians are, as a matter of course, regarded as a threat to conservatism. There is a paradox here.

Most pop musicians are, in practice (as the few public Conservatives in rock, like Police manager Miles Copeland, point out) small business people, who justify their success in terms of hard work and individual enterprise – their wealth is 'deserved'. Post Live Aid, though, to justify pop stardom in terms of getting as rich as possible seems immoral (just as 60s rebel poses now just seem self-centred). In this context to act responsibly means to display a social conscience, to reject capitalist motives of profit and self-interest. It's this general mood among musicians that Red Wedge organisers have been able to tap in recruiting their Labour party campaigners.

The Labour theory of pop value

Why has the Labour party opened itself to this pressure? At a trivial level the party has become aware of the need to adopt a new image. The appointment of Peter Mandelson, late of London Weekend Television, as the party's publicity officer is one example of the growing concern with presentation. 'The party's image has never been better', claimed Mandelson in *The Guardian* last November. 'It's very fashionable and a lot of that's to do with Neil appeal'. This new image is clearly associated with pop (see the revamped *New Socialist*). 'The Labour party is the fun party, the good time party, come and enjoy yourselves!' proclaimed the campaign van in the Brecon by-election. Kinnock's appearance in the Tracey Ullman video was just the beginning. He followed it (as Norman Tebbit followed him) with an appearance at the British Phonographic Industry awards, and whereas Tebbit clearly represented the industry (a sign that the tape levy is now Tory approved) Kinnock placed himself with the musicians. It is tempting, then, to see Red Wedge as just another way to give Kinnock style. But Red Wedge's determination (and ability) to remain critical of the party suggests that the relationship is more complex.

while Bob Geldof was mobilising this power to a noble end in Britain, the Parents Music Resource Centre was seeking to curtail it in the USA

At the Red Wedge tour press conferences in January, it was always stressed that Thatcherism has had a distinct impact on youth as youth. Policies on housing benefits, board and lodging, youth training, student grants, wage rates and education, have all affected young people directly. The result of mass school-leaver unemployment is that as 'teenager' as a consumer category has become less important (pre-teens and yuppies are the key markets now), youth as a political category, a specific interest group, has become more significant. There is an electoral argument here too – there will be 5m 18-24 year-olds on the electoral register by 1988. As Adam Lebor reported in the *New Statesman* last year: 'until 1979 Labour could be confident of winning more votes from the under-25s than any other party. But more (42%) voted Conservative in that year than Labour (41%). The trend continued in 1983 with 42% voting Conservative, 33% Labour and 23% Alliance'. Support has swung back since then but the youth vote is volatile and the party has become increasingly aware both of its failure to appeal to the young in any lasting way in the past and the need to grasp the youth vote now.

Even the attacks on the Militant tendency can be seen partly in this light. Militant's long-standing hold on the Labour party Young Socialists has prevented the party from establishing an effective youth section, and Red Wedge represents an alternative centrally-controlled approach to the young. Not that Red Wedge offers a simple solution to the Militant problem. At the local level, certainly, there is bound to be tension between Red Wedge's and Militant's claims on young socialists (already reflected in the contrast between the shambolic 'local' events and sell-out evening shows on the Red Wedge tour). The Red Wedge line on Militant (and Militant expulsions) has, so far, been confused by its wish to support the party, its determination to remain aloof from the party leadership, and its need to create a new, non-Militant manipulated youth constituency.

Red Wedge fits too into broader trends and tensions – within the party. GLC ideas are seeping slowly into mainstream Labour thought – not just its imaginative use of the media to press its cause, nor its ability to find common cause with young people (in a way Labour nationally has not), through the promotion of concert and venues, but also its willingness to act as an umbrella for a variety of causes. With the abolition of the GLC, the opportunity exists for the Labour party to take on its role, but if it is to bring together formally the GLC constituency – youth, women, CND, anti-apartheid, gays, blacks, animal rights, etc – it has to find people to represent and link these groups. Red Wedge is one way. It brings together musicians who, albeit in vague and disparate forms, have been associated as benefi bands with these different causes. Their active support for the Labour party (The Communards representing gays, Junior Giscombe and Lorna Gee young black etc,) gives credibility to the Labour party's interest in such 'minorities'.

there was an air of uplift, tinged with worthiness, to their music; it was intended to unite audiences in a common cause

Making a wedge

It is not clear, however, that Red Wedge can both represent Labour to 'youth' and various special interests to the Labour party. At the very least, there is a tension between directing arguments to the youth constituency whilst also trying to create a forum for a variety of single issue causes. Red Wedge has had little to say about sexual politics (Kinnock refers to 'Billy Bragg and the boys') – were it to take feminism more seriously on the stage or in the foyer, the question of who or what was being represented might be raised. Similarly, the Red Wedge 'line' on pirate radio, the application/use of a tape levy, marijuana legislation – on which there are a number of opinions among its constituencies – is much less clear than its support on CND or anti-apartheid, on which agreement does match the collective emotions of a pop show.

The Red Wedge pop tour depended on

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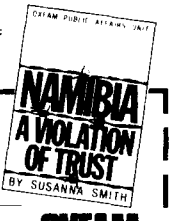

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musicians with proven popularity and a particular stage approach: there was an air of uplift, tinged with worthiness, to their music; it was intended to unite audiences in a common cause – there was no music to drive anyone away. But this use of musicians to give emotional support to politicians is only part of the cultural lesson to be learnt from socialist councils like the GLC and Sheffield, which have also been giving material support to musicians, using their resources to fund venues, studios and concerts, which may well be, in market terms, 'unpopular'. Such policies are not, that is, inspired by some simple propagandist goal on the lines of the Bolsheviks' use of massed worker choirs. Rather their intention is to provide musicians with employment and training, and to give audiences opportunities to hear unfamiliar music and new artists. Without such subsidy the cultural pluralism which parallels the political pluralism of the GLC 'coalition', could not exist, and the range of music (and musical opportunities) available would be a great deal smaller (as they will be in London now the GLC has gone).

Although Billy Bragg has stressed the need for the Labour party to continue the GLC's active cultural policy, no one has spoken of Red Wedge as a vehicle for introducing new sounds or breaking new artists. That is not its concern. It provides a platform for artists who have already established their musical and political credentials. From the Labour party's perspective, it may well be that the association of its message with rock and soul and reggae (rather than folk or brass bands or choirs) is a bold step, but from a pop fan's position (such are the vagaries of fashion) Red Wedge risks reproducing the same values of socialist romanticism and stoicism in its use of obviously 'committed' rock and soul and reggae. Do musicians like Gary Kemp of Spandau Ballet and Lloyd Cole of the Commotions believe, as they seemed to on the Red Wedge tour, that supporting the Labour party means playing acoustically, covering old Stones and Dylan songs? Is 60s soul still the only guarantee of collective uplift?

Electoral rock'n'roll

Red Wedge represents a new tactic for the national Labour party but in comparison with aspects of GLC and other municipal socialists' policies (their investment in cultural resources) there are limits to its radicalism. One of the important legacies of the GLC is the concept of 'culture industries', the political realisation that the arts aren't just a matter of moral uplift or community identity but involve job opportunities, a chance for people to have material control of their culture, whether or not they satisfy the criteria of 'art' or 'creativity'. Red Wedge is beginning to feed such arguments into Labour's arts policies but, as an organisation, it has been constructed around the *electoral* needs of the party. While municipal socialist policies have tried to provide young people with new opportunities both to participate in music making and to hear a wide variety of sounds and styles, Red Wedge is concerned to bring out the socialist implications of the music young people already hear and to direct any resulting political interest into the Labour party.

This is not to deny Red Wedge's success or importance – the publicity and full

Red Wedge risks reproducing the same values of socialist romanticism and stoicism in its use of obviously 'committed' rock and soul and reggae

houses are proof of that – or its performers' enterprise. They've shrugged off the notorious reluctance of musicians to organise; they've been prepared to discuss policies rather than states of mind and being, the usual concerns of rock thought. But if Red Wedge is a new form of mediation between the Labour party and young voters, via popular culture (which doesn't just mean music – there's also been a successful tour of Red Wedge comics) then so far the message seems to have travelled only one-way – it is easier to trace Red Wedge's impact on the Labour party than the Labour party's influence on youth. Red Wedge has, for example, already had an effect on Labour's manifesto plans, helped push cultural thought from Arts Council patronage to the implications of a Ministry of Communication, made senior politicians understand that there are pleasures in the *enterprise* of pop culture that Labour should be encouraging – by supporting an 'independent' recording sector, specialist promoters and so on.

What's less clear (and this may, indeed, be a drawback of the populist approach – giving young people what they want) is whether Red Wedge is politicising youth, providing anything more than the soundtrack to an advertising campaign. Its position is muddled on this, on the one hand claiming to represent youth, on the other to educate them. Red Wedge's audience themselves appeared to reject both mode for a more familiar one – the Red Wedg stars were there to entertain them. *Smas Hits* quoted someone leaving a Red Wedg concert: 'We didn't really come here fc the politics. They passed us by. I mean, don't like things like racialism, but th only thing it really changed my mind abou was The Smiths. I didn't used to think tha much of them.'

Despite the current radical rock banc wagon (the youth market being pursued a diligently – and superficially – by politica as by commercial interests) left politician should remain, too, at least suspicious c pop. There are differences between th world according to the leisure industry an the world according to socialists; the mar ket pursuit of the good lifestyle may b utopian but it is not utopian socialism. Th Red Wedge argument is that there ar contradictions *within* the pop industry too It is not completely run by multinational or would-be multinationals; there are im portant roles for independent and co operative recording companies, for com munity music radio stations, for state funded venues and studios. If nothing else the Labour party is now better informec on such issues – we should no longer ge knee-jerk Labour-folky distaste at the very idea of music as an industry. But electora rhetoric about 'popular capitalism' – vot Labour and we'll put on a better show! - doesn't do much to advance *socialist* poli cy. The celebration of 'independent' label and studios can come across as simply the Labour version of support for smal businesses.

The striking absence of feminism from Red Wedge rhetoric reflects, similarly, the problems of a populist cultural approach It is certainly important to campaign, like Red Wedge, for women's access to training in recording skills and to improve everyone's opportunities for a music-making career. But this policy evades the more basic question of whether rock isn't in itself the sound of white boys (an overwhelming impression at times during the Red Wedge show). It is for such reasons that it is as important to politicise pop (and pop audiences) as to give pop appeal to politics. To put it another way, the important question Red Wedge asks (and hasn't yet answered) is how to move from the recruitment of young consumers and voters to the empowerment of young producers and activists (and the nagging suspicion is that the Labour party leadership would prefer to keep people in a consuming and voting niche anyway). □

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Letters

.EXIBLE THREAT

hilst welcoming Denis Gregory and hn Atkinson's piece (*MT* April) I feel at they underestimated the extent which 'flexibility' is a direct threat union organisation and bargaining wer.

Recent agreements at Nissan, Shell, cas and elsewhere include a range items that have an immediate pact on union activities. These lude: a reduction in the number of ions recognised; changes in yment systems to make a large rtion of wages dependent upon anagement measures of dividual's performance and 'merit' ther than negotiated basic rates; sing union representation on areas shifts rather than occupation. These developments are specifically signed to limit the ability of unions d shop stewards to represent their embers independently of anagement. In these circumstances e problem is not so much that ions are taking simply defensive stures but that these postures do t recognise the nature and extent the threat from flexibility. A eative union response to anagement is required which derstands managerial objectives d does not concede key aspects of ion power.

David Pelly, Centre for Alternative ndustrial and Technological Systems

ERIOUS THINKING

kinson and Gregory's analysis (*MT* ril) of the future of the dual labour rce is shrewd but has missed some the problems. It is likely that the re will be better educated, have me minor technical qualification, efer to belong to a 'professional dy' rather than a trade union and much more inclined to accept the ilosophy of management rticularly if promotion prospects d participation are available. Where the work is done creasingly by sub-contracting, again those carrying it out are unlikely to look to trade unions who have traditionally been so hostile to this activity. Again 'professional' bodies may be more attractive. The labour movement needs to do some serious thinking.

Jack Horn, Abingdon

INFLATED CLAIM

I'm astonished at the staying power of *MT* balloons; one was inflated before Christmas 1985 and was still fully inflated and wrinkle-free on May Day 1986.

Naturally it's a red one.

Malcom Stewart, Edinburgh

CONFLICT-HATE

What are we to make of the attitude of moral outrage expressed by Hilary Barnard (*MT* letters, April)? Effectively it aims to put out of bounds words and ideas that bear any relation whatsoever to right wing stereotypes of sex and images of battle.

In the ideal world of the conflict-haters, (as I stereotype the left-idealists-intolerants) there is no war, no sex roles, and everywhere peace and joy.

May I humbly suggest that Ms Barnard and the other conflict-haters stop avoiding reality and start facing it. Rather than this harping on the need to attack stereotypes, try to understand why they exist, and how we can change our behaviour in order to challenge them.

Nellie Henderson, Edinburgh

NO FOOL

'Six crates of white wine from France, specially labelled for *Marxism Today*'. What a marvellous April fool. It was one, wasn't it?

Simon Tendeter, London

CRIMINAL DIVIDES

In view of the fact that the inner city crime rate is one of the few growth areas (*MT* May), can it any longer be denied that the Thatcher government has effectively given up on inner cities?

Thatcherism has intentionally created a divided society in terms of race, sex, class and North/South divides. It views cities as outposts mingling amongst the Tory shires. It is no wonder that the very people whom it deliberately attacks feel alienated and express their resentment in the only way people living in poverty stricken areas such as Merseyside can – through crime.

It is the Labour party's and the Left's task to give the hope and future that Thatcherism has snatched away back to the millions of people living in the inner cities.

J M Connor, Southampton

A SILENT PLAGUE

I would just like to follow on from what Paul Haggerty said at the end of his article (*MT* May). There is a silent plague which has affected the lives and health of millions of women worldwide. Specifically chlamydia, currently the most common sexually transmitted disease in the world. Of course this affects men too causing non specific urethritis, but its major casualties are women who may be silently infected initially but end up with years of pain, pelvic infection and infertility.

Instead of a widespread education programme about chlamydia the last 10 years have seen a boom in test tube babies, making millions for a few doctors. Many of the women needing in vitro fertilisation have been sterilised by chlamydia infections. Yet it is only very recently that chlamydia has had any publicity at all and much of that is because women have started to demand proper diagnosis and treatment.

There are still many areas of the country where facilities simply do not exist for the diagnosis of chlamydia. So women who suffer from it are not being diagnosed properly and face inadequate treatment. Chlamydia does not kill but brings misery to many women and their lovers and friends.

I do not wish really to label chlamydia as a plague but feel that we should be campaigning for it to have as much publicity as AIDS and above all for there to be a massive campaign for prevention *and* for adequate facilities for diagnosis and treatment.

Katy Gardner, Liverpool

SELLING OUT?

The analytical framework used by the authors of Goodbye to the GLC (*MT* April) concerns me in many respects.

Firstly, the authors ignore the fact that over 80% of the population live outside the greater London area and that the GLC experience is therefore limited.

Secondly, the article's 'analysis' of the GLC's popularity with Londoners concentrates on the use by the GLC of capitalist advertising. Far from debating the morality of this the authors celebrate its end product – the GLC has 'brilliant PR', 'style' and the 'feel' of the 80s. What gets lost in this puff of publicists' smoke is that capitalist advertsing techniques are essentially aimed at distorting and misinforming. They actually prevent real communication – the 'consumer' is reduced to a passive state in the process.

Finally, we are offered the personality who we owe the whole experience to – Ken Livingstone... not the labour movement or the Labour group.

There is a labour tradition which the authors in their (true) ignorance misread as 'out of time'. It is this tradition which I would have hoped would have been appropriate for a journal called *Marxism Today*.

T Dickson, Glasgow.

We welcome your letters for the July issue. They should be no longer than 200 words and arrive at the office not later than June 6. The editor reserves the right to cut letters.

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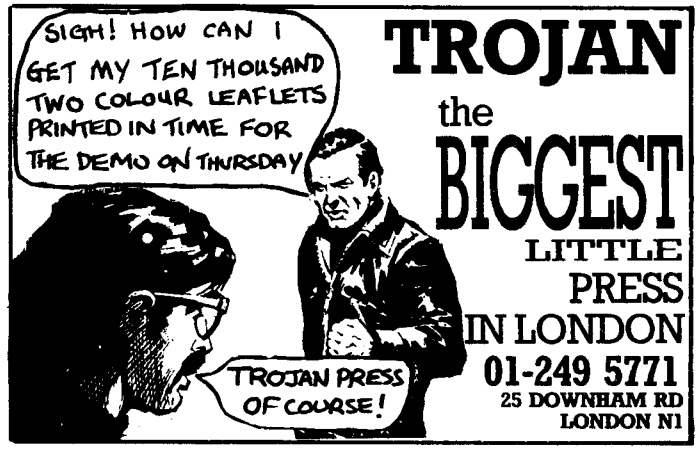

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VIEWPOINT

Crime Waves

A SOCIALIST CONCEPT OF CRIME
Paul Okojie

Richard Kinsey's article, 'Crime in the City', in the May issue of *MT* reveals very clearly the muddle and confusion which has crept into the analyses of crime in modern Britain by those who regard themselves as belonging to the 'let's take crime seriously' school of criminology. The main members of this school are Jock Young, John Lea, T Jones, Kinsey and others. They demand our attention because they claim to be on the Left.

Kinsey's piece was based in part on the results of two crime surveys in Merseyside (Kinsey) and in Islington (T Jones *et al*). He started off on an alarmist tone that since 1979 'there has been a staggering 40% increase in recorded crime in England and Wales' and degenerated into a miscellany of discussions of matters unrelated to the principal task which one thought the article was about: why crime was on the increase?

It is symptomatic of the Kinsey and Young school of criminology to start on a high and superior tone as to why we should keep vigil at nights to protect granny's jewels in case we are burgled. They start in this way, show tables and graphs of how crime has increased, particularly under the Conservative administration. In doing so, they themselves contribute to the moral panic over the increase in crime. Ultimately this school calls for more police accountability which is their inevitable solution for everything. My main criticism of Kinsey, however, is that he is asking the wrong questions and throughout his article he is attacking the wrong target.

Kinsey asserts that 'the argument that "moral panic" is nothing more than a political smokescreen behind which the strong state tools up, has . . . surely been nailed.' This is a typical attack on the so-called left-wing criminologists, who, according to Kinsey, see criminal justice policy as a conspiracy against the working class.

In fact, Kinsey's assertion is a caricature of the real situation. 'Moral panic', as a concept, was popularised in this country by Stan Cohen in the 1970s when he wrote about 'mods and rockers' – Cohen said nothing about the strong state tooling up. Another popular use of the concept is to be found in *Policing the Crisis*. There Stuart Hall *et al* illustrated how decisions of the police and the courts were affected by media accounts of the incidence of mugging in Britain. A more recent example is the coal dispute. No serious criminologist says that 'moral panic' is a cloak for the strong authoritarian state; but it is an important concept when trying to understand how society responds to certain categories of rule breaking.

As most criminologists know, 'moral panic' generates an irrational fear of crime and such an atmosphere is not conducive to formulating a constructive criminal justice policy. Although all the statistical evidence shows a consistent trend in the rise of crime, equally, it should be pointed out that there has been a substantial increase in the number of police officers as well as a substantial increase in expenditure on the police and the criminal justice system generally.

The fact remains that the police operate under a policy in which civil liberties are under attack. The policing of the coal dispute, the Broadwater Farm estate and Wapping amply illustrate this trend. Instead of focusing on these targets, Kinsey prefers to complain about low police detection rate and the cost of detecting crimes. Kinsey wrote '. . . there is clear evidence that officers deployed to other "specialised" squads (SPG), could be better and more effectively employed on the beat . . .' This is an incredible solution quite apart from the fact that he did not reveal the source of the 'clear evidence'. This leads to Kinsey's call for an effective socialist response to crime and policing, which in his case, means 'more police accountability'.

One finds that frequently the issue of police accountability is confused with the question of reducing the incidence of crime. This is convenient for Kinsey as it allows him to avoid the real question which needs to be asked.

As socialists we should be asking different questions about crime. We should not be self-satisfied with the view that we are 'taking crime seriously' because we agree with the Right that crime is on the increase. It is a self-serving approach and it does not get to the heart of the matter.

MISSING THE POINT
Brenda Kirsch

Having mapped out the problems – whic are by no means a startling revelation Richard Kinsey sadly fails in what shou have been his starting point: what would left policy on justice and security look like

Justice and security? The Left should least be constructing its own positive co cepts in this area; all too often we feel th need to ape the rhetoric of the Right, well as some of their solutions.

In his 'alternative approach', Kinse comes up with a basic set of propositions of which democratic accountability of th police is obviously the most fundamental which are not only underdeveloped but fa far short of existing left policy. For exam ple the Communist party also calls for a independent police complaints system, r peal (rather than reform) of repressiv legislation, demilitarisation of the polic and measures to eradicate racism withi the force.

Kinsey quite rightly states that the ca for accountability should not be rhetori but the cornerstone of effective policing Yet nowhere does he refer to the detaile and pioneering work done by the GL police committee in this area, outlinin what a democratic police authority coul look like in practice.

Nor does he acknowledge the genuin community based work of local polic monitoring groups, such as the Newhar Monitoring Project or Communit Alliance for Police Accountability in th London borough of Tower Hamlets whic have determinedly pressed to expose com munity concern about racial attacks an the lack of police response to become recognised political issue. The fact tha Metropolitan Police Commissioner Si Kenneth Newman has been forced t accept that racial attacks will be a priorit for policing in the Met is the result of thei initiatives.

But apart from these absences, Kinsey' alternative is also limited by its failure t make demands other than on the polic themselves. Democratisation should als involve a shift of emphasis in the role tha existing democratic institutions can play i preventing crime and the demand for mor resources in this direction.

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In this respect, community safety initiatives – first put forward by the GLC and now being taken up by some Labour councils – are an important focus. By emphasising planning and design, a safer street environment, frequent and well staffed public and community transport and resources to empower those who feel most vulnerable (self-defence classes for women, pensioners and the disabled) and more rape crisis centres for example), the basis for a genuine democratic community response to crime can be built.

All too often solutions put forward by the police and Home Office engender the barracks mentality – locks on the door, bars on the window and an alsatian in the hallway. These developments add to the alienation of so many rundown estates. And they add little to the protection of many women who, unlike the uninformed stereotype projected by Kinsey, are actually more at risk from violence within the home and family than from the stranger on the street. More women's refuges, safe public spaces and resources for women in the community are also essential parts of a left – and feminised – justice and security alternative.

This alternative needs to include demands to curb police powers and democratise the force into becoming a service. But these should also be combined with an approach aiming to restore to local government the democracy and resources which would begin to tackle the conditions which generate the fear of crime, if not the reality itself.

HENRY TROFIMENKO
Prospects for detente

In the January issue, following the Reagan Gorbachev summit in Geneva, we carried an article on the prospects for a new detente by Gerard Holden and Mary Kaldor. We have just received this response from Professor Henry Trofimenko, a leading Soviet advisor who is head of the US foreign policy department of the Institute of USA and Canada studies in Moscow.

In the January issue of your magazine I read with interest 'The new detente? East-West relations after the summit' by Gerard Holden and Mary Kaldor. One cannot but agree with many points made in the article.

I would like to add just a few things to what Gerard Holden and Mary Kaldor have noted. According to them, the Soviet Union defines strategic weapons as all nuclear systems which can reach the other side's territory. How could it be otherwise?

The protocol of the Salt-2 treaty contained certain limitations for sea-based and land-based cruise missiles of more than 600-km range. However, that protocol's term has expired, without its coming into force, because the United States has not ratified the Salt-2 treaty. So far the United States is *de facto* observing the main strategic arms limitations set forth in that treaty. Nonetheless, the US non-ratification of the treaty has meant ostentatious non-recognition of its basic principles. Instead of the concerted principles, worked out over years and written down in Salt-2, the Reagan administration began advancing its own principles which, in its opinion, justified attempts to sidestep the nuclear offensive arms limitations established in the treaty, by deploying US medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. One of those principles was equal rights and limits. Paradoxically, the Soviet definition of strategic nuclear systems as those which can reach the other side's territory, no matter where they are based, completely corresponds to the idea of 'equal rights and limits'. If you lay claim to the right to threaten the other side with nuclear weapons from a short distance, then the other can rightfully consider those weapons strategic, because they can reach its territory, that is, those weapons have the same range as the intercontinental weapons of the other side.

One should also have a clear idea of the American administration's concept of deterrence. The United States has always thought of deterrence from positions of strength or superiority. True, to calm down the other side, the United States has invented the stock phrase of 'deterrence' or mutual deterrence on the basis of 'mutual assured destruction' (MAD). It was claimed that the nuclear forces of both sides had grown as great, diversified and invulnerable (strategic triad), as both the USSR and the USA could survive a nuclear attack and could inflict on the aggressor irreparable damage in a retaliatory blow. It is alleged that these reciprocal opportunities were the best way of preventing an attack and ensuring a stable balance of forces. However, the Americans only sold the MAD concept to the Soviet side as long as they were sure that the USSR would actually have no opportunity of effective retaliation after a first US strike.

However, as soon as the Salt-2 treaty established equal opportunities for a retaliatory blow and excluded any possibility of a substantial breakaway by either side from the other in offensive strategic weapons (previously the ABM treaty established minimum parity of the sides in strategic defensive arms), Washington right away lost interest in the MAD concept and in Salt-2 which established absolute parity of retaliation. At the will of the US hawks, who have been exerting a decisive influence on US foreign policy since the beginning of the 80s, the Salt-2 treaty has not been ratified.

Seeing no chance of breaking away from the USSR in offensive strategic weapons at the given state of the art, the Reagan administration decided to forge ahead in the field of defensive strategic arms, although the difference between offensive an defensive factors has been actually crumbling in the new version of space strike weapons currently designed in the US. Hence Reagan's strategic defence initiative, commonly known as Star Wars. *Marxism Today* cites Edward Thompson for discriminating between Star Wars I and Star Wars II. The Star Wars I concept was, allegedly, a complete break away from deterrence or mutual deterence on the basis of mutual assured destruction, and offered an incomparably more humane principle of 'mutual assured survival'.

Under the idea of Star Wars II, a space shield cannot be made 100% impenetrable. Its aim is more modest. It is supposed to reinforce deterrence rather than replace it.

If we take into consideration, and I should like to add this to what Gerard Holden and Mary Kaldor have written, that deterrence US-style has always meant the deterrence of the other side from US positions of strength, we shall see that this so-called concession to critics, this allegedly more modest interpretation of the opportunities for a 'space shield', actually means the same US striving for unilateral supremacy. In other words, ensuring for itself opportunities to be utterly unrestrained on the international scene and, in the event of a nuclear conflict, ensure its survival and the defeat of the enemy. No rhetoric of the adversaries of truly equal opportunities will ever cover these aggressive aims of the current American administration. The lipservice to peace cannot conceal the hegemonic designs of the US advocates of another round in the nuclear arms race, with that race extended into outer space.

More than once the Soviet government

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stated that if the United States continued in this vein, the Soviet Union would have nothing to do but to respond to the US challenge and ensure parity at a new level and new quality of weapons. Mikhail Gorbachev noted that the Soviet side could do that effectively, quickly, and with less expenditure than the United States. However, we consider such competition has no sense at all, is sheer madness.

Dwelling on the arms race between the USSR and the US, Robert McNamara, the US Secretary of Defence in the 60s, noted: it is futile for each of us to spend $4 billion, $40 billion, or $400 billion and, at the end of all the spending, at the end of all the effort, to be relatively at the same point of balance of the security scale that we are now. McNamara made this sagacious statement 20 years ago. Since that time the entire history of the strategic arms race has borne him out. Is it really necessary for each side to spend one trillion dollars or one trillion roubles and more to 'reach a balance'? Maybe it would be better to stop this race by mutual consent and, also by mutual consent, to begin to drastically cut current existing strategic weapons, first by half, as the Soviet Union has suggested?

The answer is self-evident. So we cannot but welcome the programme upheld by the British campaigners for nuclear disarmament. Many elements in the programme, including, specifically, complete elimination of medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe, have been reflected in the Soviet disarmament programme which envisages the utter elimination of nuclear weapons by the end of the century. This programme was set forth in detail in the statement made by general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev on January 15, 1986. It has been reaffirmed in the resolution of the 27th congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union. Basic principles for a comprehensive system of international security, which the readers of your magazine probably know about, were also set forth in the political report of the CPSU central committee to the 27th congress.

The character of present-day weapons leaves no country any hope of safeguarding itself solely by military and technical means, for example by building up a defence system, even the most powerful one, because neither a nuclear war nor the arms race can be won any longer, runs the resolution of the 27th congress of the CPSU.

In a nutshell, mutual assured survival cannot be based on the arms race, even le so, an arms race in space. In his report the 27th CPSU congress Mikhail Gc bachev noted that '. . . the present level the balance of the nuclear potentials of t opposite sides is much too high. For t time being it ensures equal danger to ea of them. But only for the time bein Continuation of the nuclear arms race w inevitably heighten this equal threat ai may bring it to a point where even pari will cease to be a factor of military-politic deterrence'.

Moreover, to my mind, US statemer about a 'mutual assured survival' of tl sides concerned are as fraudulent as tl previous stock phrase of 'mutual assur destruction'. Through the arms race tl United States gains anything but recipro ity or equality in danger or security. If tl United States had really wanted equali there would have been no need either f the previous rounds of the arms race, the current one that is beginning from tl strategic defence initiative. Equal securi for the USSR and the USA and a compr hensive system of international securi can be ensured only by political means, t negotiations, through the United Nation or other international organisations.

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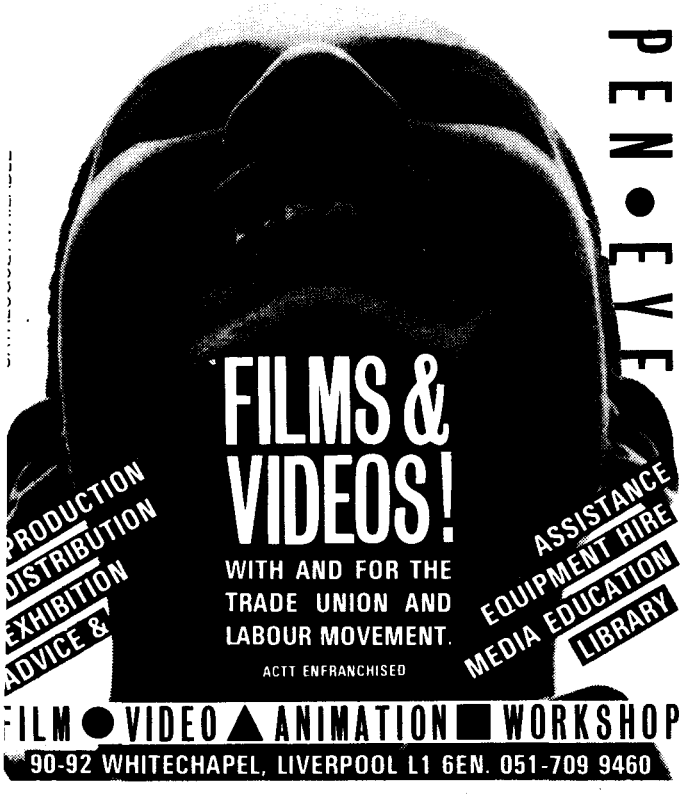

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CHANNELS

Locked in dispute with patriarchy: Simone d Beauvoir with Jean-Paul Satre, her companic for 52 years, in a cafe in Rome (1978).

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR: SHE CAME TO STAY

Ann Oakley

One of the many obstacles and paradoxes in the path of women's liberation is the murky light at the end of the tunnel – once women are liberated, what will they really look like? There are different models of liberation, and there are different understandings of why it remains difficult. According to some people, among the many things women lack (and the things others have incorrectly said they lack) is an appropriate mythology of heroism. There have to be stars up there in the firmament leading one on through the darkness, and the Virgin Mary, Queens Elizabeth I and II or Margaret Thatcher simply aren't enough. But Simone de Beauvoir was: for an unbelievably long time she shone away up there, illuminating and inspiring our darkness. Death won't put the light out, but it does provide us with the opportunity to think more carefully about what she meant to us.

I never met her, but we exchanged a letter or two. I was given her magnificent *The Second Sex* in 1960 (when I was 16) by a boyfriend who didn't think I was, and who undoubtedly knew more than I did at that stage about the whole sorry business of gender. I have read most of what she has written and struggled to relate both to what it seems to me she did say and to what I felt she ought to be saying. (Both are equally important). I have used, and probably mis-used, her work and her example, but knowing that she probably wouldn't mind very much. Being a role-model is a lonely art, not least because it's impossible to take responsibility for all the models people mould themselves into.

Simone de Beauvoir achieved something extremely valuable, but intensely irritating – she said it all before most of us even suspected there was anything to say. So when it was our turn we could quarrel with forms of words and interpretations, and we could put it differently, but we couldn't ignore the fact that we had, like naughty children in the presence of a strong mother, been given a structure to react against – or agree with – or both.

De Beauvoir's constitution of women as a cultural construction in *The Second Sex* and its lesser known companion volu *The Nature of the Second Sex* provided basic pacifist ammunition of the wome movement when it was reborn a dec later. Yet many ideological uses of t work unintentionally devalued its intell tual value; it has stature as a work literature and of political and philosoph theory which will outlive its service to shorter-term ends of feminism.

Simone de Beauvoir's volumes of au biography present another kind of ch lenge. As others have noted, the f volumes published between 1958 and 19 present her life as a rational and unif project. She recounts a version of event which she is the controlling figure, dec ing on their meaning to her and on wh direction to take next, without any of de-energising agonies most of us expe ence. Not only does she fulfil for us social function of being a role-model, b she has the audacity to present herself as example, when that is the interpretati we ourselves wanted to be able to put her life and its representation in her wo She takes the words out of our mouths, b she nonetheless leaves us with the feeli that she's covering up something, underworld of experienced oppressi perhaps; hatred of men, unresolved fe and anxieties, improper conduct or mer

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ersonal untidyness and lack of order t will recommend her to us as an inary mortal after all.

Despite her concern with the respecte and necessary status of autobiogray, Simone de Beauvoir presents us look- into her soul. There are no deranging ecstatic revelations in her work, and the ments of intimacy are confined to a rely mental realm. She can't write much out sexuality, about children, about dness. As she is our mother we are not owed to know her, only what she wants to know of herself.

De Beauvoir is also an intensely ambivat figure for feminism, and like the moth the flame, we are continually attracted k to the ambivalencies she represents. r assertion of liberty amounted in prace (though not in theory), to the right to e like a man. She chose not to enrol in typical destinies of woman-marriage l motherhood, but, most of all, motherod. In this act (and in the rejection even an unfulfilled desire to be a mother) she s herself apart from most women, and kes it easy for us to understand her gular achievements. But yet, on the ier hand, at the centre of her life there s the relationship with Sartre, a man o obviously clothed a macho pursuit of erosexual liaisons in the convincing ical language of existentialism. Did not tre do to de Beauvoir what men are ays doing to women, and should we not pect her for taking it, as she did?

It is possible, moreover, that de auvoir would not have seen through ntil much later) her own protestation it being a woman didn't affect her life, less Sartre had pointedly disagreed with r. In these respects, it's easier to identify th her; her dependence and anxiety can recognised after all as emotions which aped her life.

A young student I know said that when e heard the news of de Beauvoir's death her car radio she had to pull over to the e of the road to take it in. I'm not sure will. I think she's still sitting there in a ris café arguing on our behalf. It uldn't surprise her to know that we're writing these clichés about how she *was* example for us (of exactly the kind she d she was), and how the light at the end the tunnel went out for a little while ien she died, until we reorganised in our ads that image of her still locked in nest dispute with patriarchy in the eathless, irritating, romanticism of the risian spring.

HIGH TECH CITY

Richard Hill

The building trade in London looks to the City for its highest prestige jobs: to work on a large project there means you have arrived. Bovis, and an array of specialist contractors, sub-contractors, suppliers, surveyors and security people, are on the final stages of the new building for Lloyd's insurance. Bovis have been around in the City for some time. The architects, Richard Rogers and Partners, are a new arrival.

The Lloyd's building is not the largest project in the City, the Broad Street site office development for instance is much bigger, but it is the one which is exciting most interest among other architects. It contains 11 office floors and also 'The Room' – a big open space where insurance underwriters each have a stall. It is much like the 'trading floors' now being built in the City in anticipation of de-regulation.

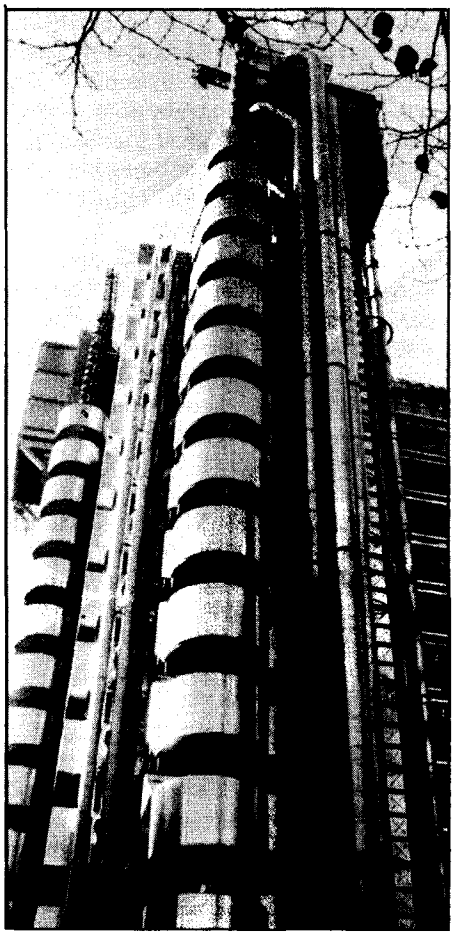
The idea of a 'trading floor' is that banks can have a large number of people in one place sitting at computer terminals which give information on financial and other markets all over the world. They can buy and sell instantly as the information changes.

Architects have to consider two quite new issues. The first is that space is needed under the floor for all the cables leading to terminals, telephones etc. The second is that there has to be a large uninterrupted open space so that people sitting at the numerous terminals can see one another and respond to any wave of excitement that might be happening elsewhere. Someone else's excitement may be crucial for the deals you are trying to make yourself. Lloyd's also has this interdependence of technology and face-to-face contact. The Room and the office floors have therefore been designed to be uninterrupted by columns with a deep floor structure to take the cables and also the lighting, ventilation etc.

A high glass-roofed 'atrium' space runs up through all 11 storeys and the floors wrap around it. The structural columns, service ducts, stairs, toilets and lifts are all pushed to the outside of the building. The converse of the grand and uninterrupted inside spaces is therefore a varied and picturesque arrangement of towers on the outside. This fits well with the varied views in this part of the City and links with the glass and metal arcades of Leadenhall Market next door. The lifts are glass boxes on the outside of the building. The passerby will see underwriters and office workers gently rising and falling; from inside the lifts London will fall and rise as Paris does from the glassed-in escalators on the Centre Pompidou.

Lloyd's is a very expensive building, though its prestige will bring in high rents. Much of it is prefabricated and many components come from abroad. The materials – stainless steel, marble, granite, specially-textured thick plate glass – are all designed to last. Enormous craft skill has to be devoted to working these hard intractable materials. The building finally appears not so much an industrial product as a giant's toy: intricate, crystalline, shiny.

Before the Lloyd's building, Richard Rogers and Partners designed the Pompi-



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The Lloyds building: the stairs, lifts and ducts are all on the outside.

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dou cultural centre in Paris. This is a combination of libraries, museums, galleries, performance spaces, bookshops, restaurants, held together in a coloured steel framework. It draws 7m visitors a year, more it is claimed than the Louvre and the Eiffel Tower put together. They designed a factory in Wales for Inmos, the microchip manufacturer. It is a spidery steel structure sheltering white 'clean rooms' where the microchips are made in the purest possible conditions. For contrast the rest areas are brightly coloured and the canteen looks directly into the surrounding woodland.

Being an architect is not like being a painter, alone in a studio. Fame attaches to the individual but the process of work is a collective one. Rogers, it seems, does not work by doing a grand sketch which is then detailed by other employees. His role is to get a team – engineer, client, quantity surveyor – working together, initially to clarify the brief and its problems. The more constrained the problem is the more essential this process is: 'you have to turn the problem on its head'. Rogers is a generalist heading a 'multi-faceted team'.

He considers that the ideal size of the architectural firm where this kind of teamwork can operate is about 30 people. When times are good the tendency is to expand beyond this. When times are bad the practice shrinks. Even so, his practice is quite large by the standards of a profession where three-quarters of private practices are no more than six people. Rogers' firm can make a lot of money: the practice 'constitution' limits a senior partner's salary to no more than seven times that of the lowest paid full-time architect (about £10,000). Compare that £70,000 income with the median for principals in private practice of £18,000.

The constitution also provides for one third of the practice's profits to go to charity. At the moment they are giving money to the NSPCC, an educational trust, and a hostel in Notting Hill. He believes that at a time when the government 'is reducing support for the less fortunate', that people like him who have been lucky have a duty to act.

At the moment he feels that private charity is the only possible way, though not the right way. A generation ago, a successful architect like Rogers would have had large commissions from the public sector: housing, schools, maybe a new university. Professional success was compatible with an idea of public service.

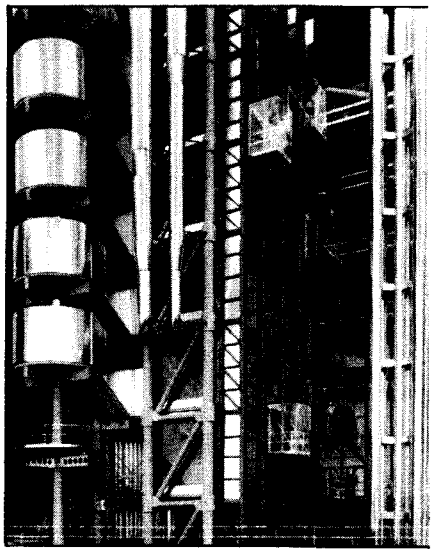

Photo: Martin Charles

Above and top left: the Pompidou Centre in Paris; top right: a model of the Lloyds building in the Cit

Nowadays very few private architects get famous or wealthy from public sector jobs. Those who don't, have to square their political views with their dependence on banks, expanding companies, developers and rich private clients.

Crucial to Rogers' style is the idea that the parts of a building should be visible to the user and the passer-by. Normally th structure of a building is covered over b the facade and all the services are put in th middle. Rogers reverses this, partly fo practical reasons, but also so that th building can 'explain itself', can show wha it is made of and how it works. This is a important a reason for putting stairs, lift

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:ts on the outside of the Lloyd's build- as the practical justification of creating uninterrupted inside space. By doing ; he hopes to create a popular hitecture that enhances the use and lerstanding that people have of build- s.

There is currently a wider range of hitectural styles in circulation than ever ore, ranging from Rogers' 'high tech' to :sical revival, (an office block in meticu- s 18th century imitation style has re- tly been completed in London) with a pitched roof traditionalism occupying the centre ground. These camps vie with each other with increasing hostility. What they all have in common, however, is the proposition that to be successful, architecture must appeal to the common man and woman. They would claim that Rogers is wrong to suggest that lifts, ducts, toilet modules are the essentials of architecture and should form the basis of architectural style. It is common for architects to draw analogies between buildings and the body. Thus Rogers might be said by his critics to display the skeleton, circulation and digestive system of a building. They would prefer to see buildings as the outer human, as having character and expression.

It requires some subtle argument to show how a physical object like a building can have character and expression: the most-used arguments are crude ones about association and tradition. Rogers, although increasingly interested in the need to respect the historical context, sees buildings as mechanisms to be displayed and uncovered rather than as human faces.

LOVE AND BRITISHNESS

Rosalind Brunt

ese have been apocalyptic times. But it s spring and love was in the air. In ırch came the engagement of Prince drew and Sarah Ferguson. Then in ril the love of the British people for een Elizabeth was demonstrated to ex- s on her 60th birthday – with her story retold all day, recalling her love- irst-sight encounter with Philip ıuntbatten and the enduring affection of ir marriage (40th anniversary *next* :r).

\t the end of the birthday week, the ıth of the Duchess of Windsor was the :asion for the recycling of The Greatest ve Story of Our/All Time together with publication 'only in the *Daily Mail*. . . the Windsor love letters that could ınge history: 'My Darling Sweetheart' ıning on into May. The letters were en an 'historic world exclusive' tag and :gated to an inside page the news of ıclear Disaster: Countdown to Catas- phe'.

So how to account for the media obses- n with royalty in such times? Why ıuld their new and rehashed love-stories ture as of greater import than the threat worldwide radiation sickness after the ernobyl accident or imminent bomb ıck throughout the Libyan crisis? As a liminary explanation, I think the ligned term 'bourgeois diversion' still something going for it.

ndeed, recent events could hardly pro- e a better example of how the royal ıily may work to preserve the status). Their doings are invariably presented us as most fascinating, most humanly :resting, even though, or precisely be- se, they cannot in any way materially :ct our lives. By comparison, news of catastrophe, crisis and disaster which may literally be the death of us, remains at the level of an overhwelming abstraction, a terrifying unknowable fate that is visited upon us and appears outside of human agency and control. But we 'all' know where we are with the royal family when the media invite us to participate in their lives and loves and relate them to our own.

The royal family as bourgeois diversion is undeniable. The problem is not the idea itself but the empty sloganising way it can be used to imply some kind of deliberate propagandist conspiracy perpetuated by the media on behalf of the ruling class. So if the British people are not to be labelled as gullible dupes of a royal media con-trick, how come we consent to our own diversion? What is so appealing, so diverting, about the royal family?

Take the coverage of the Queen's birthday, coming in the immediate aftermath of Thatcher's decision to let Reagan use British bases to bomb Libya. The news showed a massively intensified security operation mounted in Windsor and London; but also the Queen's manifest determination to carry on as usual without obvious additional protection and to participate in the familiar rituals – just when signs of continuity and tradition were most required.

And once again, the media took the occasion to plug the Queen's biography into key moments of national history, particularly those of the second world war. So the images replayed: the two princesses on *Children's Hour* encouraging evacuees; the King and Queen in the blitzed East End; Elizabeth in uniform changing a wheel; the family and Churchill on the palace balcony on VE day; enter the gallant

THE UGLY DUCKLING BORN TO BECOME A PRINCESS
ROYAL LOVE STORY
Happy Birthday!
BLOOMIN'
HECK, MA'AM
The Windsor love letters
Start of the feud with the Queen Mother... 'How she is loving it all'

naval officer, Philip. . . One by one the symbols of love and Britishness were dusted down and restored after Thatcher's unbearable exposure of the nation's political weakness. Our island history, reduced to the role of Yankee aircraft carrier and direct nuclear target, had been a bad dream after all.

The birthday celebrations were a dramatic instance of how the monarchy has become almost the sole prop and mainstay of the national identity. They also indicated a new level of love and affection for the Queen herself. The first-time ritual

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(bound for instant traditional status) of the children's procession down the Mall, the 'With all our love/Good in ev'rything' song and shower of daffodils was exceedingly radiant smile, lump-in-the-throat stuff commemorated in next day's press as 'Bloomin' Marvellous! Well Done, Ma'am! Many Daffy Returns!'. Though popular mythology and *Spitting Image* has it that she is always trying to outrival the Queen for the nation's attention, no one will ever venerate Mrs Thatcher in these terms. But then she is not a very nice person, unlike the Queen, and also she is far too 'political'.

One of the major symbolic effects of Thatcherism, and Thatcher herself as its most unpleasant embodiment, is to render all politics, not just its own, as a thoroughly nasty business. Particularly given the ineffectual level of opposition, Thatcherism has the potential to infect and discredit the whole sphere of what is generally understood as 'political'. It is not so surprising then that it should now often appear that the alternative to the present government is not any form of socialism but the last major bastions of feudalism: the extremely nice, now very lovable, indeed, bloomin' marvellous, Queen and family because they are so obviously not political beings but human ones.

As delightful human beings they are knowable and intelligible to their subjects. They follow the same patterns, observe the same markers, of family life. So it was perfectly predictable and normal that after his 'Randy Andy' period the Prince would want to 'settle down' and 'start a family'. Quite appropriate too that he would choose a 'modern girl' with a newly-acceptable 'past' who offers sparky fun and good-news copy. The royal engagement both signals the interminable adaptability of royalty to changing mores and also confers public recognition on those apparently unchanging and natural rites of love-and-marriage.

Sarah Ferguson herself has been immediately transformed into another human interest character for mass identification: from the soft-porn British Telecom gimmick, 'Dial F for Fergie' to the exhortations to supposedly podgy brides to 'Crash Diet with Fergie'. And in the Fergie Fantasyland of lovable royal people, politics will only intrude as the bad news initiated by nasty people. Hence, *The People*'s frontpage headline for 20 Apr 'Fergie Honeymoon Shock – Gada wrecks Med Cruise Plan'. Horrid Liby terrorists, the blighters of true love a happiness! A scenario immediately und standable and all too readily grasped ir way that the complexities of Palestine a American imperialism are assumed not be.

If world affairs are clearly beyond t ken, interest and control of the public, do all know something about affairs of t heart. With the publication of the Winds love letters, the *Mail* invites its readers act as 'a Grand Jury' in a nationwide po 'The King and Mrs Simpson: YOU w give the verdict: Do the letters confirm t existing view of her as a femme fatale wl destroyed a King?. . . Are the code wor of love as innocent as they sound, or they reveal a sexual intimacy?. . . At t end of the series, you, the readers, will asked to judge.'

This is familiar terrain; we are we qualified to do what's asked of us and i not complicated, nasty political or unnat ral. Royal loves and love of the royal These are the ties that bind – and repub can Britain is remoter than ever.

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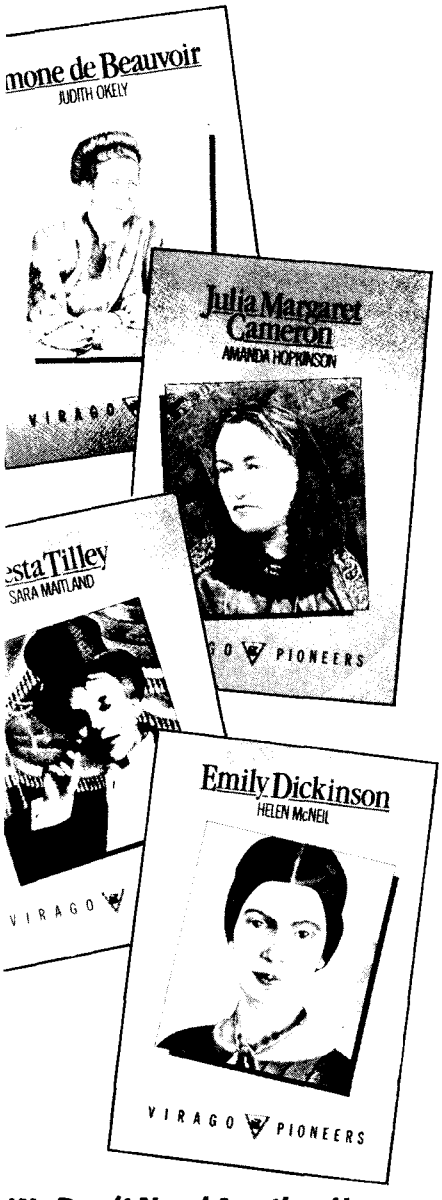

We Don't Need Another Hero

Emily Dickinson Helen McNeil;
Vesta Tilley Sara Maitland;
Simone de Beauvoir Judith Okely;
ulia Margaret Cameron Amanda Hopkinson
Virago Pioneers Series

the 70s American and English feminists nfessed their hearts out to us in novels uich appeared to reveal the hitherto spoken experience of women. Through :ntifying with the struggles of the thinly guised autobiographical characters, we) would be empowered to break our ackles and emerge as newly constituted tonomous women. The appeal was a yeuristic and comforting one – by know- ; each other's secrets we would confirm : transparency of women's oppression – were all the same underneath the chains. It was too comforting a message, as black and working class women pointed out – soothing over differences only led to their exclusion from women's politics. This approach also denied the contradictions all women live in their allegiance to, and challenge of, male authority. Fictionalising victims or heroines were sides of the same coin of a unitary, a-historical, sublime oppression.

Virago in the 80s have tried a new tack to tap our appetite for getting an inside look into women's lives. Only this time instead of offering us 'everywoman', we are getting 'pioneers': famous women, or, in some cases women who have been wrongly denied fame, an injustice to be righted by the printing of their biography. Virago claims the series as not only reassessing these women's lives, but also their ideas.

And yet biography is a strange tool for doing this. What is the effect of the suggestion Sara Maitland makes that the music hall star Vesta Tilley began impersonating a boy for the stage at the age of eight in order to resolve the intimacy between her and her father while touring together? Or the story Amanda Hopkinson blithely tells of the photographer Julia Margaret Cameron 'adopting' an Irish girl and making her work initially as a parlour maid and later as a photographic model, while denying the girl's mother access to her? In the former case, it may make the impossibility of witnessing Vesta Tilley's performance (there are only a few poor recordings and no film of her) even more intriguing. In the latter, if you already find Cameron's pictures of women unpleasant and sickly representations of femininity, it will affirm the distaste.

The only book of the series so far which determinedly refuses to use biography as a means of analysing women's ideas is Helen McNeil's exciting exploration of Emily Dickinson's poetry. Early on she explains why: 'This tendency is the literary criticism version of gossip . . . Women's writing is traditionally thought to be merely personal, merely a cry of women's circumstances.' McNeil puts forward a complex argument for Dickinson as pioneer of a poetry which breaks with tradition by abstracting from feeling and experience. But unlike her contemporaries, the emotions and the truth she investigates admit fragmentation and do not insist on an unproblematic identity.

Dickinson chooses writing rather than speech because it allows inquiry, rather than an imperial self making a speech to convince its audience:

'It is the Ultimate of Talk
The impotence to tell.'

What Dickinson has to tell of includes experiences of masochism, fear and loss, which are often categorised as feminine attributes. But her challenge to the mythology of women as victims lies in her assumption of desire as continual and innate. The loss and pain is experienced in the framework of women desiring, rather than as women losing their status as desirable object.

Dickinson's poetry is extraordinary in its power and depth and McNeil manages skilfully to encourage a reading of its complexity. She also gives us a picture of a woman who confused and confounded the women and men around her, like Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who reeled at the intensity of her concentrated, highly metaphoric speech. Dickinson went largely unpublished during her lifetime and yet continued to write. 'Whether or not anyone was ever going to read, let alone understand, her investigations, she carried them out on her own, in writing for about 25 years. This was a decision of great courage, and equally, great stamina.' Emily Dickinson stands as perhaps the original heroine, a title she would no doubt have vehemently rejected, preferring to have her work rather than her life appreciated.

The other books in the series are much lighter reading, or else, as in Judith Okley's biography of Simone de Beauvoir, infuriating. Okley embraces the confessional form with vigour, attempting to prove that de Beauvoir's world view is limited by class and race, through treating us to her own reading of de Beauvoir as a student. Twenty years later, Okley has seen the limitation of her own white, middle class upbringing and gives us further scepticism about de Beauvoir as an intellectual 'divorced from experience or practice beyond her class and culture'. Ironically Okley sees her own status as social anthropologist as overcoming these limitations; investigating 'oppressed minorities' apparently gives access to the larger world rather than confirming her own class position.

Sara Maitland tells us she admires Vesta Tilley for overcoming the odds stacked against her as a working class woman in Victorian England. Tilley's rise to stardom, respectability (during a time when 'actress' was used as a euphemism for

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'prostitute'), wealth and eventually to becoming a Conservative MP's wife, is remarkable enough. But Maitland somehow conveys a picture of an unlikeable woman, who although immensely popular with women, was keen to distance herself publicly from their adoration. My mother, who claims we are related to Tilley, says she did a lot for herself, but not a lot for women. Family connection or not, I'd agree.

Amanda Hopkinson's life story of the bossy, imperialistic photographer Julia Margaret Cameron (she described her own creativity as based on 'the recognition of the Individual . . . the men great through genius, the women through love') is a weak book. Hopkinson argues that although Cameron's version of the world is gender-stereotyped, her construction of beautiful objects marks a pioneer. This avoids questioning the origin of the notion of beauty in which we are colluding; it also fails to investigate the possibility that her methods of working simply reveal a member of the ruling classes using their resources to expoit others, manipulate the press and finance their hobby.

Using biography to help construct 'great women', heroines to match the world's over-population of heroes, is a double-edged strategy. A reassessment which moves women's work and ideas out of the shadows is valuable. But one which maps their work from their lives ultimately trivialises; they become 'unusual' women who are only interesting because of that.

Eileen Phillips

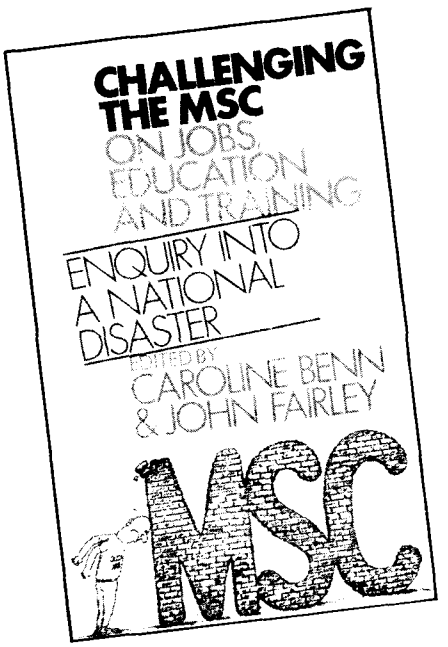
A National Disaster?

Challenging the MSC on Jobs, Education and Training
Ed Caroline Benn and John Fairley
Pluto Press £5.95

The Manpower Services Commission started life in 1974 as a small public body to co-ordinate the work of the Training Services Agency and Employment Services Agency. From a tiny outfit with a modest budget employing a handful of staff it has grown into an organisation of some 20,000 with an annual budget approaching £2 billion.

The MSC has become the single most important influence on vocational education and training in this country, penetrating deep into the territory of the Department of Education and Science. Best known for widely criticised programmes like the Youth Training Scheme and Community Programme, the MSC has recently secured a transfer to itself from the rate support grant of 25% of the resources for work-related further education.

Dictatorial and unaccountable, the



MSC has swept aside important arrangements, traditions and democratic controls in the field of education and training. It has become a key instrument in the Thatcherite political project, reorganising training for narrow market-led purposes, relying on employers to call the tune in terms of content and much of the provision.

The response of the labour movement to the MSC has been fragmented and, given the widely varying relationships of different unions to the labour market, to education and training, to the organisation of young people, this is perhaps not surprising. Young people, the main recipients of MSC schemes, have varying experience. A minority are lucky enough to get on to courses put together with care and involving genuine education and training, but for vast numbers the experience is of a narrow 'vocationalism', rock bottom allowances, sexual and racial discrimination, minimal safety standards and an inability to exercise any power.

This book is a useful contribution to the development of a broader understanding of the forces at work in the rise of the MSC and the character of its development. Its editors do not claim, quite rightly, that the 11 essays offer a detailed synthesis of an alternative policy. The emphasis is rather on the development of an ideological c sensus which could facilitate the constr tion of a more collective approach.

They reject a strategy which wo focus on a boycott of MSC activities as unrealistic way forward either in term confronting the issues or of involving th engaged in developing alternative polic let alone the hundreds of thousands dep dent on the MSC itself. Whilst the edit define their position as one of 'oppositic most contributors espouse an immediat well as a longer-term perspective wit some rigorous critiques of the system a is.

One notable omission stands out: th is no analysis of the attempts to prov reasonable quality programmes within present limited MSC framework or of current work on the development pl being thrashed out between individ local authorities and the MSC as a resul the compromise reached over the nc rious 'Training for Jobs' white paper.

There is general agreement that a r national initiative is needed, that edu tion and training need to be integratec recognition of the fact that the 'best pre ration' for any job is a high level of gen education and that all jobs should invc high quality training.

In an incisive essay on 'The MSC the Local Community' Leisha Fullick c cludes: 'The MSC has come to be institutional embodiment of particu class divisions in our society. The insti tional divide needs to be overcome and position of vocational education and tra ing enhanced if there is to be a rad reform of the system which gives eq respect to all kinds of knowledge. T equal respect will only come through living experience of people who not o have increased access to education training but also power to control it.'

Paula Lann

Indian Summers

A Maidan View – the magic of Indian crick
Mihir Bose
Allen & Unwin £11.95

There is nothing that publishers like m than to launch a book on the back topical event. So the timing of *A Mai View* looks spot on, coinciding as it d with this summer's cricket tour of Engl by India's national team.

Undoubtedly the presence of Gavask

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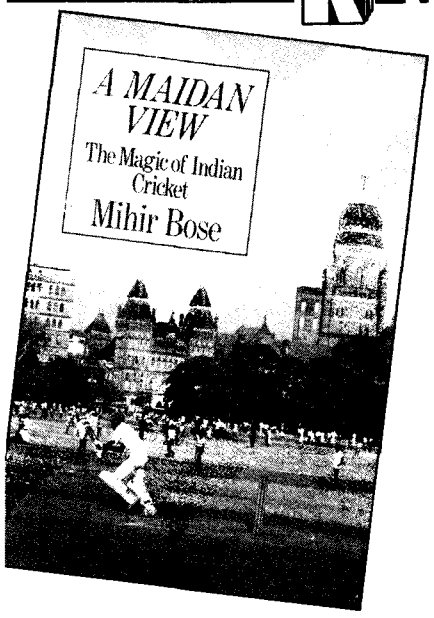

apil Dav, Azharuddin and others will :lp boost sales to English cricketing *icionados*. Yet to promote this book as ›thing more than a basic commentary on icket does it a grave injustice. Bose's ork has less in common with the usual nd of cricket books, churned out every :ar by second-rate writers ghosting for ird-rate players, than a park game does ith a test match.

A Maidan View is a journey through ›stwar India as seen through the eyes of ıe man. While its central theme is crick-, the game is no more than a vehicle hich Bose uses to help him explain the ıeasy development of a proud country ill struggling to come to terms with itself ter nearly two centuries of British rule.

It is difficult to understate the social ıportance of a cricket test series to India's :osperous upper middle-classes. During st-match week in Delhi, it seems that cal businessmen and professionals talk of ›thing else. On two Delhi tv channels, ıere is ball-by-ball coverage of the game – ıe in Hindi, the other in English. News-ıpers devote whole pages to reports and ıalyses of the previous day's play. And ıuch is made in the press of the thriving lack market in tickets for best seats. For ıyone who has witnessed this remarkable st match fever, it would be easy to leave ıe country with the impression that the whole nation is cricket mad. But as Bose makes clear, nothing could be further from he truth.

The explanation of the apparent para-ox lies at the very heart of modern Indian ›ciety. Just as considerable urban wealth ves alongside vast rural poverty, so the :icket-playing and cricket-watching :owds live among literally millions of Indians who have never even heard of the game.

In India, test match cricket tends to stratify social groups in much the same way that horse racing at Royal Ascot does in England. Both are events at which the rich can show off their wealth; business-men can impress clients; and social climbers can rub shoulders with those they seek to emulate. The test match is the perfect showcase for those Indians who have inherited the mantle of the Raj and those who would like to do so. As Bose says: 'This is a society that has taken over all the institutions of the Raj down to the last hallowed club tradition, and even the obligatory Friday buffet lunch.'

Yet, says the author, it would be a mistake to conclude from this that the tremendous popularity of cricket in India reflects a love for England and all things English. Indeed quite the reverse is true; somehow Indians have dissociated the English sporting creation and their own adoption of it. According to Bose: 'Those who patronise, administer, and provide the money and the fervour for cricket in India today, are perhaps the most fervently anti-English Indians possible. The popularity of cricket is not to be equated with the popularity of England or any values associated with this country'.

This is just one of the complexities of the Indian cricket scene. Then again, consider the remarkable love-hate relaionship that India has with her greatest living batsman and one of the finest players ever to have graced the game – Sunil Gavaskar. While few would dispute his immense natural skill, he is dismissed by many Indians as a 'money-mad' mercenary who has for too long hogged the cash as well as the limelight. In almost any other cricketing country, Gavaskar would be a national hero – like Botham in England or Richards in the West Indies – but there are sections of Indian society which vilify him. The book takes a more anglicised view of a cricketer who has translated his sporting prowess into personal wealth.

As well as working with Bose, I also play cricket for a team of journalists which he captains with unsurpassable enthusiasm. It has to be said that if he could play as well as he writes, we would win every match; this book is a truly fascinating piece of literature. On one level it offers an insight into the world of Indian cricket with all its political in-fighting. On another it is a crash-course in Indo-British history.

Jeff Randall

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Union Scene

POLITICISING NURSES

NURSING THE FUTURE

Politics is a dirty word to most nurses, who are usually regarded by other health service trade unionists at best as apathetic and at worst as traitors. Yet the Royal College of Nursing is one of the 10 biggest unions in the country – and the largest union outside the TUC.

Until the RCN admitted men for the first time in 1960, it was ruled by respectable matrons whose chief preoccupation seemed to be garden parties and OBEs. Today it has nearly 250,000 members, comprising 65% of qualified nurses, 75% of nursing students and nearly all those in management and education. And the men have done very well in a 90% female occupation; Trevor Clay, the college's general secretary, is living proof of what he himself describes as a 'rising tide' of men in top nursing posts.

It may be more than coincidence that the increasingly male-dominated leadership of the RCN is seeking a place on the broader political stage. No longer content with its powerful influence over professional issues like education and clinical practice, its ambitions are turning towards larger forums like the media, parliament and even the TUC.

Since its certification as a trade union in 1977, the RCN has enthusiastically taken up everything on offer, including government funding for membership ballots. Last year it appointed a political officer to lobby MPs of all parties, and early this year it spent £250,000 on a national media campaign against the introduction of general managers to the NHS.

Affiliation to the TUC has been on the cards for some time and is supported by the self-styled progressives among the leadership. The move was rejected in 1982 in a full membership poll with a poor turnout, but the issue is still alive and the sizeable minority in favour has swelled. While this is partly due to Tory reforms, allaying nurses' fears that the TUC was a home for strikers and subversives, there is no evidence to support claims that the RCN would line up alongside any right wing breakaway movement initiated by such as the EETPU and the UDM. Its main interest is the NHS, not industrial unionism. Furthermore, such an overt move would probably drive out some of the activists to rival unions such as Cohse and NUPE.

If the RCN applied for TUC affiliation in the next few years, how would it affect NHS trade unionism? Co-operation might be improved and the RCN might take a firmer stand on issues like privatisation. Despite their public posturings, the college and the other two major unions representing nursing staff have worked effectively together through Whitley Council collective bargaining. In 1982, RCN members twice threw out government pay offers and this unexpected unity undoubtedly prolonged the dispute.

The college's determination to secure a pay review body (in the mistaken belief that it would award doctor-style rises) caused a big rift, however. The other unions find it hard to forgive the RCN for effectively removing nurses' pay from the bargaining arena.

The other big problem – though bigger on paper than in reality, probably – is the RCN's Rule 12. This is popularly regarded as a no-strike pledge. In fact it bans 'withdrawal of services' but not other limited forms of industrial action – the only kind of action most nurses are prepared to take, whatever union they belong to. Emotionally, though, it is important, not least in the public's eye, and the angelic no-strike stance is often exploited by the college.

If the RCN does join the TUC it will be walking a tightrope between its desire for greater influence and its dislike of cloth-cap unionism. The winds of change, though, are blowing in its direction; its concern with public image and apolitical politics is certainly this year's model.

Jane Salvage

FORD – MADE IN JAPAN

When Hayato Ichihara rose to speak, his audience of Ford union leaders from around the world, looked on transfixed somewhere between awe and horror.

Ichihara is president of the Mazda Workers' Union, which represents the non-managerial employees in the company's 27,000 workforce. He was in Geneva addressing the second World Auto Council of unions that represent Ford workers, organised by the International Metal Workers Federation.

And there is no doubt that Ichihara is a successful union leader. Employment at Mazda is stable and secure despite massive investments in new technology, and the associated productivity gains. He meets with management to discuss issues which most union chiefs only hear about through the press, ranging from technologic change to global corporate strategy.

Ford management have tried to intr duce Japanese production techniqu through a variety of means. Most promi ently they have attempted to involve their 383,000 employees in a programr which mimics quality circles.The pl came from Detroit, filtered through t empire, but with only patchy success.

So Ford have turned to an increasing important collaboration with Mazda introduce Japanese techniques, Troj horse-style. Mazda will start produci cars at a new factory outside Detroit 1987. This showcase, highly automat factory is the future staring in the face unions elsewhere.

The European unions are overwh mingly worried by the possibility of over-capacity crisis in the European ma ket. Last year the then head of Fo Europe, Bob Lutz, talked of the need close a European plant.

British unions desperately want establish a European union forum to d velop joint policy, but they are constant thwarted by the Germans. 'The Germ industry is the good part of the Europe industry', said an IMF official. 'And t Germans know this and are keen to main tain pole position.'

The German union IG Metall is example of a European version of t Japanese option. It is a strong industr union, which last year won a major strik But is also productivist. 'We welcome n machines and technology,' said a Fo works council member. 'That is the on way to get a grip on the company.'

The stabilisation of the market, produ tivity growth, sourcing of compone manufacture in developing countries, ha made international solidarity harder a harder to engineer.

In the end the message of the conferen despite the glowing communique was n solidarity but competition. All the leade know they are effectively salesmen w have to be able to offer Ford as much of t kind of workforce that it needs and want without endangering union goals. At th moment Japan, is leading that race fol lowed by Germany and Spain.

'But looming behind even Mr Ichihara a new threat: South Korea', said an IM official. 'The South Korean view of Jap is: pretty good products, but such la workers'!

Ben Mowbra

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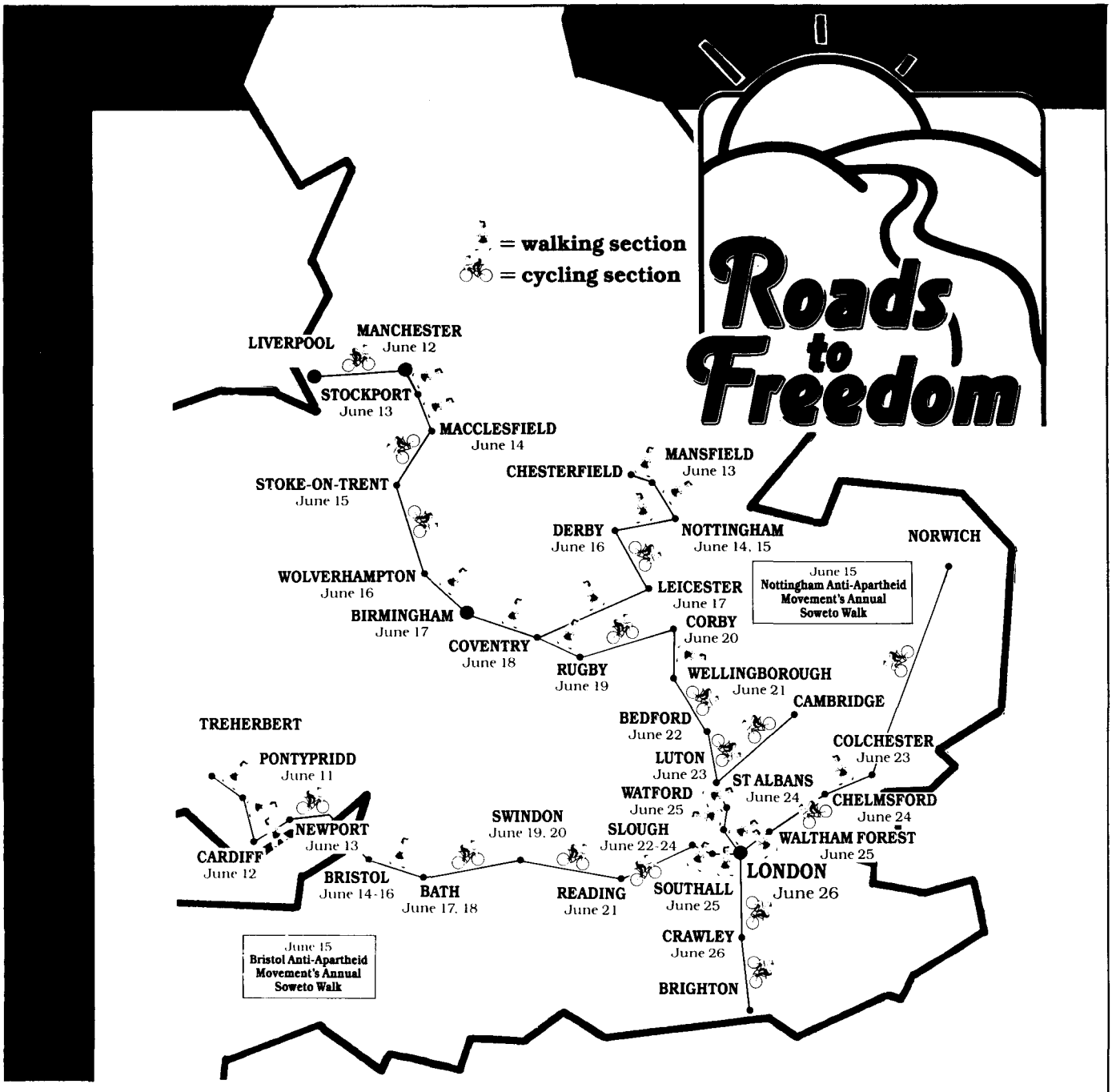

To add to the success of the Anti-Apartheid Movement's national 'March for Freedom' on June 28th, the Communist Party is staging marches and cycle rides in relays to converge on London on the day of the great march.

There will be 40 one-day stages linking scores of towns. Each stage forms a separate event with different people taking part. Meetings and benefits will be held every evening along the route.

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Update

EWS

nsor a Creche Worker Women e creche desperately needs volun- 's to help on the weekend of July and donations to help towards ing for the full-time staff. Contact athon 01-272 4756.

s is a new arts magazine. Issue 1 interviews with Nicaraguan folk- er Carlos Mejia Godoy and dancer ald Abud Vivas and with Ben- in Zephaniah as well as features poetry, punk and comics. Avail- from : Fires, 3 Bodney Rd, Lon- E8 1AY.

x Memorial Libray has launched £85,000 appeal to stabilise and abilitate the interior of the Geor- building which it occupies. Con- Andrew Davies or Max Egelnick 53 1485.

e Against Apartheid *Marxism To-* is sponsoring a 10km/2 mile fun to raise funds for the African ional Congress's Freedom Col- . The race will take place in Fins- bury Park, London on October 26 as part of Left Unlimited. Anyone interested in getting involved with the organising group, contact Mark Perryman 01-251 4406.

Kensington & Chelsea *Marxism Today* readers group now established. Other readers welcome. Details Brian 01-229 7456 or Mary, 01-244 9831.

MEETINGS

Birmingham *Marxism Today* **Discussion Group** meets first Sunday of the month, 8pm Star Club, 25 Essex St. Pete Sheppard and Ray Chatwin on 'Law and Order and the Left' June 1. Tel. 021-692 1765.

Centre for Caribbean Studies Discussion Forum 86. 'Towards a Black Film Culture', Reece Augiste, June 4; 'Black People and the Urban Question in Britain', Winston James, June 11; 'The Question of Black Leadership', panel discussion, June 18. 7-9pm, Goldsmith's College, Lewisham Way, London SE14. Details: 01-692-7171 x 2296.

Prospects for the Left Speakers: Ken Livingstone and Martin Jacques, June 5, 7.30pm at Anson Rd School, Anson Rd, London NW2. A *Marxism Today* meeting organised by Willesden CP. Contact Eric Boon 01 452 3171.

CONFERENCES

Health Forum 86 A conference on the national health service. Workshops on democracy in the NHS, privatisation, women's health. Speakers include Frank Dobson MP, Derek Fatchett MP and Dr Christopher Burt. Organised by West Yorkshire Socialist Health Association with the support of the TUC health campaign. June 7, 10-4 at Leeds Civic Hall. Details 0482 442233.

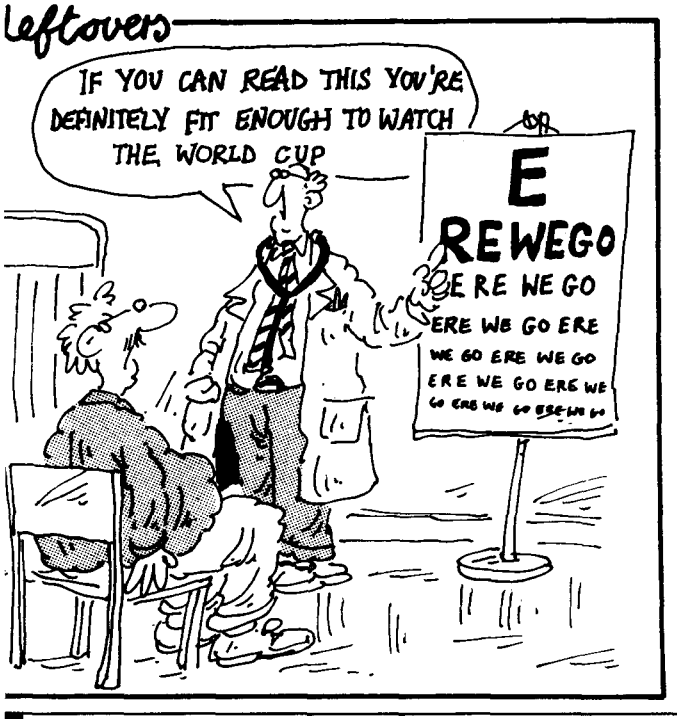
Divided Britain A conference for trade unionists. Speakers: Rodney Bickerstaffe, Maragret Prosser, John Smith MP, Jo Richardson MP. Workshops on poverty & trade unions, facing up to wage differentials, and sessions on alternative strategies. June 28, 1-4 at ULU, Malet St, London. Organised by Child Poverty Action Group. Contact 01 242 3225/9149.

EVENTS

Lesbian and Gay Pride Week. A discussion on 'Is there a Left Morality?' 7-9pm July 1. London Lesbian & Gay Centre, Cowcross St, London EC1. Also: disco 9-11pm. Proceeds to Defend Gays the Word Campaign and Lesbian Line. Organised by *Marxism Today* and the CPs Lesbian & Gay Advisory. Details 01 708 1204.

Women Alive South Bank Polytechnic, Borough Rd, London SE1, July 5-6. Tickets £12 waged, £6 unwaged (day tickets also). Details 01 251 4406.

Common Pursuits *Marxism Today* presents a day of discussion on cultural politics beyond the GLC. Speakers include: Ken Livingstone; Pat Coleman; Naseem Khan; John Pick; Stuart Hall; Vittorio Campione (organiser of Italy's Unita festivals); Fred Coulter; David Edgar; Sylvia Harvey; Alan Tomkins; Kathy Myers; Ken Worpole; Frank Mort; Angela McRobbie; Saturday July 12 at Riverside Studios, Crisp Rd, London W6. Details from Martin Pople on 01 251 4406 x 139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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Andrew Gamble is senior lecturer in politics at Sheffield University and the author of *Britain In Decline.*
George Henderson is a journalist and broadcaster on North Africa and Middle East affairs.
Helen Hague is on the labour staff of the *Financial Times.*
Tony Hall is the authhor of *Nuclear Politics* (Penguin).
Zhores Medvedev is a geneticist and author of *Soviet Science* and *Gorbachev.*
Sally Davison is *Marxism Today*'s reviews editor.
Glenys Kinnock is a schoolteacher and founder member of One World.
Joan Ruddock is founder member of One World and was, until recently, chair of CND.
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Brian Simon is the author of *Does Education Matter?* and is a member of the Communist party's national education committee.
Simon Frith teaches scoiology at Warwick University and reviews records for *The Observer.*
John Street teaches politics at the University of East Anglia and is the author of *Rebel Rock* (Blackwell).
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Henry Trofimenko is head of US foreign policy problems department at the USSR *Academy of Sciences Institute of USA and* Canada Studies.
Ann Oakley is deputy director of the Thomas Coram Research Unit. She is the author of several books and co-editor with Juliet Mitchell of *What Is Feminism?* (forthcoming from Blackwell).
Richard Hill works in a council building department and is a member of the CP.
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Jane Salvage is a registered general nurse working as a freelance writer and is the author of *The Politics of Nursing.*
Ben Mowbray is a journalist and member of the CP.
Stephen Wagg lectures in sociology at East Warwickshire College, Rugby, and is the author of *The Football World* (Harvester) and contributor to *Off The Ball* (Pluto).

Entries for the July Update should be sent to the office by June 6. For information: tel Diane Dixon on 01-965 7482 (evenings) or 608 0265 (day). Please try to ensure you state how accessible the venue is for people with disabilities.

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CLOSE • UP
ON

Bobby Robson

Stephen Wagg

photo: Camera Press

The media frenzy of the World Cup football competition will soon be upon us once again. Hordes of newspaper reporters and tv anchorpersons will descend on Mexico City and begin the patriotic work of shoving microphones under the chins of their respective national team managers, asking how did training go today, or what explanation can they offer for yesterday's 1-1 draw against lowly Third World opposition. The attention of the Fleet Street/Wapping contingent will focus on the not wholly remarkable figure of the England team manager, Bobby Robson.

Robson's life could have been scripted by the prickly *nouveaux riches* of today's Conservative party central office. He was born in 1933 in the small mining village of Sacriston, County Durham, the fourth of five boys born to Lillian Robson and her collier husband Philip. His childhood was like thousands of working class childhoods of the era: hard, happy, disciplined – father reaching for his belt when necessary – and circumscribed by a stern Methodist faith.

Robson is awed by his parents' stoicism. His mother, the solitary female in a household of seven, longed for a daughter, but hid her disappointment. His father, ever mindful that if you didn't turn up for work you didn't get paid, missed only a single shift in 51 years down the local pit. He is also proud that all his brothers, clearly imbued with a remarkable sense of striving, have 'got on': aside from the England football manager, the family now boasts a chief engineer at the NCB, a prosperous newsagent, a supermarket owner and senior draughtsman with an oil company.

Robson's own route out was of course, professional football. At 17, in 1950, he rejected an offer from his local club, Newcastle United, on the grounds that their big spending policy limited opportunities for young apprentices. He signed instead for Fulham, making his debut the following year. He played wing half – now called 'midfield' – and was one of several class players at Fulham at the time, notably Johnny Haynes, a future England captain.

In 1956 he moved into the First Division when he signed for West Bromwich Albion, and within 12 months he had gained the first of his 20 England caps, scoring twice in the 4-0 defeat of France. Playing for England brought him into contact with Walter Winterbottom, manager of the England team and director of coaching for the football Association. Winterbottom was an inspiration to hundreds of young professional footballers in the 1950s. Scorned on Fleet Street as a boffin peddling irrelevant 'theories', Winterbottom gave many League players a sense of their own expertise and a conviction that football teams could be coached and managed to greater effect.

As his disciples began to get jobs as coaches and managers at league clubs, this conviction fed a new managerialism. Robson, like all his generation, scoffs at the men who managed football clubs up to the 1950s. The general view is you never saw managers then: they just poked their heads round the dressing room door before a match and told you not to hang about in the bath afterwards. Robson resolved, like most of his contemporaries, to forge a closer tactical and personal relationship with any players he might manage and to demand autonomy in team matters.

Robson finished his playing days at Fulham and got a job managing Vancouver football club in Canada. This appointment was aborted within months by the club's bankruptcy and Robson returned to England to manage Fulham. The comedian Tommy Trinder had lately been replaced as chairperson by property tycoon Sir Eric Miller. Miller, a Jew of humble origins and wheeler-dealer in the modern mould, was close to the prime minister Harold Wilson, having found the Conservatives anti-semitic. He was wealthy and interventionist in the manner of many men who have taken over football clubs in the last 20 years.

He and Robson clashed bitterly over playing matters and Robson was dismissed after nine months. The day he was fired he stood in the middle of the Fulham pitch and wept. 'I thought only layabouts and social misfits claimed dole money', he remembers. 'There was no disgrace, I soon learned, in being unemployed'. When told years later of Miller's suicide, Robson reflected bitterly: 'Shows how he stood up to pressure, doesn't it?'

Robson soon landed another job, this time at Ipswich. His account of his stewardship there is an extraordinary ideological mixture. He found, he says, a decrepit club dominated by backsliders, two of whom he took on in a John Wayne-style fist fight. He then nurtured a young team, culled largely from the club's apprenticeship scheme, which performed well in the First Division and won the FA Cup in 1978. Augmented by the talented Dutchmen Muhren and Thijssen it won the UEFA Cup in 1981. Although he stands as strongly for professionalism as any other modern manager, Robson always valued the fact that the Ipswich board was dominated by John and Patrick Cobbold, Old Etonians for whom winning was not the only thing in football. The England post is one of the few that would have tempted Robson from Ipswich.

When he became England manager in 1982, Robson called, perhaps unsurprisingly, for 'the spirit of the Falklands' to be expressed by Wembley crowds watching England. His teams have been neither very good nor very bad at eliciting such a response. They merely reflect the state of the national game here and elsewhere: functional, forgettable and perpetually in search of new marketing strategies.

With the press, he is readier to talk than his predecessors Ramsey, Revie or Greenwood were, but he acknowledges that he's not a 'front-of-house-man' and would rather not compete for column inches with the more garrulous managers. He is also wounded, just as other England managers have been, by press treatment of the 'pathetic England' or 'X must go' variety: he once threatened, for instance, to 'put one on' Brian Glanville of the *Sunday Times*.

But in the world of the football manager, with its absurdly individualistic ethos, it is not easy to convince oneself that *anyone* in the job would get the same ritual abuse (athough they undoubtedly would). Football managers *have* to believe in themselves *and* to find some way of coping with ludicrous public expectations. Robson, an earnest and vulnerable man, consoles himself with thoughts of his luxury East Anglian home, the public school education he procured for each of his three sons and, above all, like so many football people, with the realisation that he is 'absolutely besotted by football' and couldn't imagine earning a living any other way.

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Kiev Summer Course Replacement. Owing to the interruption of our Kiev summer term course, a new course has been arranged at Krasnodar University continuing until July and late applications are welcome.

PARIS

Fete de l'Humanite. 12th–15th September by coach to Paris for the great left-wing festival. Returning via Reims with a wine tasting in Champagne. £63. Special Spanish language coach arranged for the Chile Cultural Committee.

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Medical Exchange Programme. Two week visit for doctors and health workers in June and for medical students 24th August – 6th September, sponsored by UK–USSR Medical Exchange Programme. Details on request.

MARATHONS ABROAD

Following our 100-strong contingent to the Moscow marathon in August 1985, a programme of marathon and other tours for runners is available, including the US–USSR Goodwill Games Marathon (open to all comers) 3rd–14th July and Moscow Peace Marathon, 6th–14th August. From £365.

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Godfrey Smith, The Sunday Times

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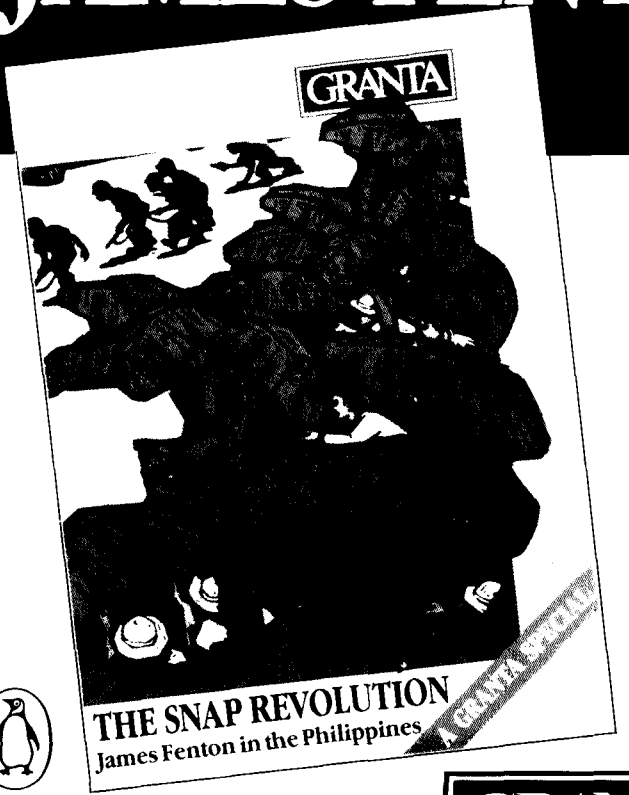

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